



An Roinn Cultúir,
Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of Culture,
Heritage and the Gaeltacht

Customer Service Charter 2016-2018



Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| About the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht | 3 |
| Customer Charter 2016 - 2018 - Service Standards | 3 |
| 1. General Information | 3 |
| 2. Official Languages | 3 |
| 3. Contact by Telephone | 3 |
| 4. Written Correspondence, including correspondence received via email and fax | 4 |
| 5. Meetings and Visits to our Offices | 4 |
| 6. Accessibility | 4 |
| 7. Consistency and Impartiality | 4 |
| 8. Complaints | 5 |
| 9. Appeal/Review | 5 |
| 10. Ombudsman | 5 |
| 11. Protection of Children | 5 |
| 12. Access to the Records of the Department | 6 |
| 13. Monitoring and evaluating our performance | 6 |
| 14. Feedback | 6 |
| 15. Help us to help you | 6 |
| Appendix 1: Contact Details for the Department | 8 |
| Appendix 2: Contact Details for the Bodies funded from the Department's Vote | 11 |

About the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

The Department's principal offices are located in Dublin, Galway, Killarney and Wexford.

Contact details for our offices and main services are provided at Appendix 1. Staff are also based in national parks and other regional locations throughout the country. The Department also has a number of bodies that are funded from our Vote and these are listed in Appendix 2.

The Department's mission and mandate is:

To promote, nurture and develop Ireland's arts, culture and heritage; to support and promote the use of the Irish language and to facilitate the development of the Gaeltacht and Islands.

Customer Charter 2016 - 2018 - Service Standards

This Customer Charter 2016 – 2018 sets out the standards of service that you may expect from this Department. It describes what you can expect when you contact us; what you can do to help us to improve upon our service; and where you can obtain further information.

1. General Information

We will provide comprehensive and up-to-date information about our policies, schemes and services, on our website www.chg.gov.ie.

2. Official Languages

We will provide quality services in both Irish and English and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through either official language. If you wish to communicate through Irish, we commit to:

- Respond to you in Irish if you write to us in Irish;
- Provide you with a member of staff who can deal with you in Irish;
- Provide a comprehensive fully bilingual service to you if you are availing of any of the schemes administered from our offices in Na Forbacha, Co. Galway and Na Doirí Beaga, Co. Donegal;
- Publish our key corporate documents in both Irish and English, such as our Annual Report, Statement of Strategy and Customer Service Action Plan – in accordance with our obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003.

A list of services provided through Irish is contained in the Department's Irish Language Scheme, published under section 11 of the Official Languages Act 2003, and available on our website www.chg.gov.ie.

3. Contact by Telephone

If you contact us by telephone, we will:

- Answer all calls as promptly as possible and identify ourselves and our area of work when we answer your call;
- Deal with you in a helpful and courteous manner and provide you with as much information as possible;

- Try to answer your query immediately, but if we cannot do this we will take your contact details and follow up with you within an agreed timeframe;
- Deal promptly with messages left on voicemail and return calls as early as possible, generally within a day, where required; and
- Make it easy for you to contact us by providing contact details in relevant publications and websites.

4. **Written Correspondence, including correspondence received via email and fax**

If you write to us, we will:

- Acknowledge correspondence via email where a contact email address has been provided within 3 - 5 working days and issue a formal reply in clear and simple language within 20 working days.
- If it is not possible to give a full reply within this period, we will send you an interim reply with an indication of when the matter can be finalised.
- Ensure that all of our written replies include the name, address, direct telephone number, email address and any other relevant contact details of the staff member who is responding to your correspondence.
- Ensure that staff use automated email messages when out of the office to ensure that the customer is given another point of contact within the relevant office.
- Provide useful email addresses on our website, www.chg.gov.ie and in other corporate material.

5. **Meetings and Visits to our Offices**

Our main office **opening hours** are:

Monday to Friday, from 9.15 am until 5.30 pm

Information in relation to the opening hours in our visitor centres and national parks can be found on www.npws.ie and relevant websites associated with National Parks. Please be aware that some National Parks offices and visitor centres are seasonal.

Please pre-arrange meetings with staff in our offices before your arrival to ensure their availability to meet with you and to avoid any unnecessary inconvenience you may experience if they are unavailable. To do this, please contact the office you wish to visit prior to your arrival (contact details of the offices are listed in appendix 1).

Departmental offices will ensure that:

- Our offices comply with occupational health and safety standards;
- Our public offices are accessible for people with disabilities; and
- Meetings are arranged at a time that suits you and that you will not be kept waiting unnecessarily for a scheduled meeting.

6. **Accessibility**

We will ensure that our offices are accessible in so far as possible and we will provide maximum assistance and support to enable you to conduct your business.

7. **Consistency and Impartiality**

We will treat our customers with respect and courtesy and ensure there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of

the Traveller Community. We will administer schemes, provided directly by the Department, to the public in a consistent and impartial manner.

8. Complaints

We aim to deliver the best possible service to our customers. If you are dissatisfied with the quality of service that you have received you have the right to complain. We recommend that you first contact our staff locally to see if they can deal with your concerns. If the matter is not resolved to your satisfaction at local level you may contact our Customer Service Officer (contact details below) on an informal basis. You can also avail of our formal complaints procedure, details of which can be found on our website, www.chg.gov.ie. All complaints received will be acknowledged within 5 working days and processed within 20 working days.

The Customer Service Officer
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Room 303
23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 631 3913
Email: customer.service@chg.gov.ie

9. Appeal/Review

For customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services or grant schemes provided by the Department, we operate an accessible and formal system of appeal or review. Details of appeals and review procedures will be available in the guidance material provided with each application process.

10. Ombudsman

Our customer complaints procedure and appeal/review procedures are in addition to your statutory right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman. However, the Ombudsman will usually expect that the customer will have first made a complaint to the Department and to have tried to resolve the matter directly in this manner. You can contact the Ombudsman at:

Office of the Ombudsman
18 Lower Leeson Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 678 5222
Lo-call: 1890 22 30 30
Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

We will cooperate with the Ombudsman or any other people or organisations that act for you. Our Customer Service Officer will be happy to provide any information or help that you may need.

11. Protection of Children

The Department has a corporate duty to promote the safety and well-being of children with whom it is in contact in any capacity. In delivering our services to children, we undertake to provide a safe environment and experience in which the welfare of the child is paramount.

We will adhere to the recommendations of *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* and will develop policies to fully meet the requirements of any additional legislation enacted in relation to the protection of children. The Department's Child Protection Policy and Children First: Sectoral Implementation Plan are both available on the Department's website, www.chg.gov.ie.

Over and above the complaint procedures which operate in this Department, there are a number of avenues open to children and their parents or guardians to pursue redress in cases of alleged violations of children's rights. These are provided through the complaint procedures of various State bodies and agencies, such as Tusla: The Child and Family Agency and the Health Service Executive, as well as independent statutory bodies, such as the Ombudsman for Children's Office, the Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. There may also be the possibility of pursuing redress through a legal challenge in the courts. Ireland has ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on a communications procedure allowing violations of the rights of children as set out in the convention to be communicated directly to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Any such communication is subject to rules of admissibility, including the exhaustion of all domestic remedies. More details can be sought from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, www.dcyh.gov.ie.

12. Access to the Records of the Department

When you seek access to records held by the Department every effort will be made to make these available to you to the greatest extent possible and in the shortest possible timeframe.

However, you may of course avail of the statutory mechanisms supplied by the Freedom of Information Act 2014, the Access to Information on the Environment Regulations and the Data Protection Acts.

Further advice and guidance on making requests under the aforementioned legislation is available on the Department's website at www.chg.gov.ie. If you have any queries, please contact:

Corporate Governance Unit
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Room 303
23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 01 631 3829
Email: corporate.governance@chg.gov.ie

13. Monitoring and evaluating our performance

We will evaluate our performance against the standards set out in this Charter. The results of the evaluation of our performance during the year will be published in our annual report.

14. Feedback

We welcome and encourage you to provide us with your views, comments and suggestions on our delivery of services to you. We will consult with our customers in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. If you would like to make a comment or suggestion on any aspect of our service, you can do so by sending an email to our customer service mailbox customer.service@chg.gov.ie or by writing to the Customer Service Officer at the address provided above under Section 8 of this Customer Charter.

15. Help us to help you

To assist us in meeting our service standards it would be appreciated if you would facilitate us by providing us with as much information as possible in dealing with your query. In particular:

- Please quote relevant reference numbers in all communications and ensure that application forms are fully, accurately and legibly completed;
- Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of schemes before completing application forms and provide all necessary supporting documentation, adhering to the relevant deadlines;

- Provide your contact details, including if possible a daytime telephone/mobile telephone number or email address;
- Respond promptly to requests for additional information;
- Inform us promptly of any changes to your circumstances which may have a bearing on decisions made by the Department;
- Treat our staff in the way in which you would like to be treated.

The following behaviour is not acceptable from any member of the public in any of our facilities or in the provision of any of our services:

- Harassment of staff by use of abusive, racist or threatening language;
- Use of violence or threats of violence towards any of our staff members;
- Behaviour which is disruptive or which otherwise interferes with delivery of a quality customer service.

Customers are advised that where a staff member is subject to such treatment, contact will have to be terminated.

We will work to ensure that our customers' expectations and needs are considered and responded to. The principles of consultation will remain central to our work over the lifetime of this plan.

Appendix 1: Contact Details for the Department

Website of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht – www.chg.gov.ie

Key Contacts:

Press and Information Officer

Press Office

23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2 D02 TD30

Tel: 01 631 3807/631 3838/631 3848

Email: press.office@chg.gov.ie

Customer Service Officer

Room 303

23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2 D02 TD30

Tel: 01 631 3829/631 3832

Email: customer.service@chg.gov.ie

Freedom of Information/Access to Information on the Environment/Data Protection

Room 303

23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2 D02 TD30

Tel: 01 631 3829/631 3830

Email: corporate.governance@chg.gov.ie

Child Protection/Designated Liaison Officers

Gaeltacht unit:

Tel: 091 503 711

All other units:

Tel: 01 6313833

Department Locations:

Dublin

23 Kildare Street, Dublin 2 D02 TD30 (01) 631 3800 / LoCall 1890 383000

- Corporate Governance and Services (corporate.governance@chg.gov.ie)
- Human Resources, Training and Development (personnel@chg.gov.ie)
- Culture Ireland, International and Education (info@cultureireland.gov.ie)

Custom House, Dublin 1 D01 W6XO (01) 888 2000 / LoCall 1890 202021

- National Monuments Service (nationalmonuments@chg.gov.ie)
- Built Heritage and Architectural Policy (builtheritage@chg.gov.ie)

90 King Street North, Smithfield, Dublin 7, D07N7CV (01) 888 3242 / LoCall 1890 383 000

- National Parks and Wildlife Service: Legislation, Licensing and Property Management (natureconservation@chg.gov.ie)
- National Parks and Wildlife Service: Strategy and Regional Operations (natureconservation@chg.gov.ie)
- National Parks and Wildlife Service: Science and Biodiversity (natureconservation@chg.gov.ie)

Third Floor, Joyce House, 8-11 Lombard Street East, Dublin 2, D02 Y729, (01) 675 5910

- Creative Ireland (creativeireland@chg.gov.ie)
- Commemorations Unit (commemorations@chg.gov.ie)
- Placenames Branch (logainmneacha@chg.gov.ie)

Galway

Na Forbacha, County Galway H91 KX39 (091) 592 555 / 503 700 / LoCall 1890 201401

- Gaeltacht agus Oileán
- An Ghaeilge taobh amuigh den Ghaeltacht

Killarney

New Road, Killarney, County Kerry V93 A49X (064) 662 7300 / LoCall 1890 273000

- Arts, Film and Investment (arts.unit@chg.gov.ie)
- Cultural Policy and Institutions (culturalpolicy@chg.gov.ie)
- Accounts, Finance and IT

Wexford

Newtown Road, Wexford, County Wexford Y35 AP90 (053) 911 7500 / LoCall 1890 202021

- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Peatlands Issues and Land Designation (natureconservation@chg.gov.ie)

Local Gaeltacht office

Aonad 4, Páirc Ghnó Ghaoth Dobhair, Na Doirí Beaga, Co. Dhún na nGall F92 AK61 (074) 953 6800

- Rannóg Acht na dTeangacha Oifigiúla

Ballina

Government Buildings, Ballina, County Mayo F26 E8N6 (096) 24200 / LoCall 1890 202021

- Accounts

National Parks

Ballycroy National Park, County Mayo (098) 49996 / 49888

www.ballycroynationalpark.ie

Burren National Park, County Clare (065) 682 7693

www.burrennationalpark.ie

Connemara National Park, County Galway (095) 41054 / (076) 100 2528

www.connemaranationalpark.ie

Glenveagh National Park, Co. Donegal (074) 913 7090 / (076) 100 2537

www.glenveaghnationalpark.ie

Killarney National Park, Co. Kerry (064) 663 1440 / (064) 663 1947
www.killarneynationalpark.ie

Wicklow Mountains National Park, Co. Wicklow (076) 100 2667/ (076) 1002667
www.wicklowmountainsnationalpark.ie

There are also a significant number of nature reserves, which are protected under Ministerial Order, under the care of the Department. Please see the website www.npws.ie for further details.

Appendix 2: Contact Details for the Bodies funded from the Department's Vote

| Body | Website Address | Contact Details |
|--|--|--|
| An Coimisinéir Teanga | www.coimisineir.ie | An Coimisinéir Teanga An Spidéal Co. na Gaillimhe Tel: 091 504 006 |
| Údarás na Gaeltachta | www.udaras.ie | Údarás na Gaeltachta Na Forbacha Co. na Gaillimhe Tel: 091 503 100 |
| Arts Council | www.artscouncil.ie | The Arts Council 70 Merrion Square Dublin 2 Tel: 01 618 0200 |
| National Archives | www.nationalarchives.ie | The National Archives Bishop Street Dublin 8 Tel: 01 407 2300 |
| Irish Manuscripts Commission | www.irishmanuscripts.ie | Irish Manuscripts Commission 45 Merrion Square Dublin 2 Tel: 01 676 1610 |
| National Museum of Ireland | www.museum.ie | National Museum of Ireland Collins Barracks Benburb Street Dublin 7 Tel: 01 677 7444 |
| Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) | www.imma.ie | Irish Museum of Modern Art Royal Hospital Kilmainham Dublin 8 Tel: 01 612 9900 |
| National Gallery of Ireland | www.nationalgallery.ie | National Gallery of Ireland Merrion Square West Dublin 2 Tel: 01 661 5133 |
| Crawford Gallery | www.crawfordartgallery.com | Crawford Art Gallery Emmet Place Cork Tel: 021 480 5042 |
| National Concert Hall | www.nch.ie | National Concert Hall Earlsfort Terrace Dublin 2 Tel: 01 417 0000 |
| National Library of Ireland | www.nli.ie | National Library of Ireland Kildare Street Dublin 2 Tel: 01 603 0200 |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Chester Beatty Library | www.cbl.ie | Chester Beatty Library Dublin Castle Dublin 2 Tel: 01 407 0750 |
| Governors and Guardians of Marsh's Library | www.marshlibrary.ie | Marsh's Library St Patrick's Close Dublin 8 Tel: 01 454 3511 |
| Screen Ireland | www.screenireland.ie | Irish Film Board Queensgate 23 Dock Road Galway Tel: 091 561 398 |
| Heritage Council | www.heritagecouncil.ie | Heritage Council Áras na hOidhreachta Church Lane Kilkenny Tel: 056 777 0777 |

North South Bodies

| Body | Website Address | Contact Details |
|--|--|---|
| Waterways Ireland | www.waterwaysireland.org | 2 Sligo Road Enniskillen Co. Fermanagh BT74 7JY N.I. Tel: 00 44 (0)28 6632 3004 |
| An Foras Teanga, which comprises: | | |
| 1. Foras na Gaeilge | www.gaeilge.ie www.forasnagaeilge.ie | Foras na Gaeilge 7 Merrion Square Dublin 2 Tel: 01 639 8400 |
| 2. Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch | www.ulsterscotsagency.com | The Ulster-Scots Agency 68-72 Great Victoria Street Belfast BT2 7BB N.I. Tel: 00 44 (0)28 9023 1113 |



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