

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Customer Charter 2009 - 2011

We are committed to providing our customers with the most timely, efficient and courteous service possible

Our commitments to you

Meeting your needs is important to us and we aim to achieve this by

- Providing comprehensive information in a user-friendly format on all of our schemes and services.
- Giving you the best possible service and providing helpful advice.
- Setting real and achievable targets for service delivery which will meet the changing expectations of our customers.
- Treating everyone properly, fairly, impartially and with courtesy.
- Striving to ensure that your rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation are upheld in the delivery of our services.
- Aiming to meet any special need you may have.

Help us to help you by

- Quoting reference numbers when writing to us about an existing application or query.
- Providing a daytime telephone number or e-mail address in your correspondence if available.
- Treating our staff in the way that you would like to be treated yourself.

Contact by Telephone

- Our staff will answer your telephone enquiries promptly and politely.
- We aim to answer your calls within an overall average of **20 seconds**.
- We will give our name and the name of the Section you have called.
- We will try to answer your questions straight away. If we cannot do so, we promise to take your details and tell you when you can expect to hear from us again.
- Messages left on voicemail facilities will be dealt with promptly and, where required, calls returned within **1 working day**.

Contact by Letter or e-mail

- Correspondence will be responded to in clear plain language within a maximum of **20 working days**.
- Where this is not possible an interim response will be issued to you within **10 working days** with the contact details of the person dealing with your correspondence and the date when you can expect a full response.
- If your correspondence relates to a matter that comes within the remit of another public body, we will direct the correspondence to that body and inform you accordingly.
- Use of automated e-mail responses by all staff when out of the office.

Meetings

- Meetings will be arranged, where possible, at a time that suits you and we will not keep you waiting unnecessarily.
- Where possible we will provide private meeting rooms to discuss your query.
- We will try to answer your questions fully. If we cannot do this we will arrange to phone you, or write to you if you prefer.
- We will ensure that our offices comply with occupational health and safety standards.
- We will ensure that our offices and services are accessible for people with disabilities.

Information Sources

- We will continue to appropriately advertise significant developments in our schemes and services.
- We will organise public information meetings on major changes in policy and/or operations where appropriate.
- Our website will provide comprehensive information on the Department's activities and all our schemes and services.
- We are committed to the continued development and improvement of our online services. This will include a facility to register for the Department's existing and future electronic services and receive updates by email and/or short messaging service (SMS).

Service in Irish

- We will continue to develop services to facilitate customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish.
- Our Annual Report, Statement of Strategy, Customer Charter, Customer Action Plan, Farmers' Charter and Action Plan and Schemes and Services booklet will be published in both Irish and English.

Feedback and Evaluation

- We are committed to consulting with our customers and evaluating our services.
- We have a formal Customer Complaints Procedure for responding to complaints in relation to our service delivery and commitments.
- All complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly and impartially.
- We will measure and evaluate performance against commitments in our Charter and keep them under review to continuously improve our service.
- We will regularly survey our customers on the quality of the services we provide and will report on our performance in our Annual Report.

You can help us by

- Providing comments, complaints or suggestions regarding the service you receive.
- Completing and returning any customer survey forms that we may send you.

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