

APPENDIX A**External Customer Charter****Our Mission**

The purpose of the Department of the Taoiseach is to help the Taoiseach and the Government to develop a sustainable economy and a successful society, to pursue Ireland's interests abroad, to implement the [Government's Programme](#) and to build a better future for Ireland and all her citizens.

Our work is guided by the Vision, Mission and Values of the Civil Service, which are set out in the [Civil Service Renewal Plan](#).

Our Commitment to our Customers

The Department of the Taoiseach is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all our customers in accordance with the 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service. We will treat all our customers equally and make every effort to ensure that the services we provide reflect your needs and expectations.

This Customer Charter is the Department of the Taoiseach's public statement on the levels of service customers can expect when dealing with this Department. It does not seek to cover all the functions and services provided by the Department, but outlines our commitment to you, the customer, and describes:

- The levels of service you are entitled to expect when you contact the Department;
- How your input can contribute to the improvement of our services; □ How to obtain further information or make a complaint; and
- How to contact the Department.

Levels of service to expect when contacting or visiting the Department

Whether you write, telephone, email us or call to the Department in person, we will deal with your enquiry efficiently and promptly and treat you with courtesy and respect.

If your enquiry relates to a matter that comes within the remit of another public body, we will direct your enquiry to that body and inform you accordingly.

Written contact

- All correspondence will be acknowledged within 3 working days of receipt;

- Where required, a further response to all correspondence will issue within 15 working days or, 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;
- Replies will be in clear, simple language, free from jargon and technical terms insofar as is possible; and
- A contact name, telephone number and email address will be included in all written correspondence.

Telephone contact

- Calls to the main Department switchboard will be answered promptly;
- All callers will be directed to the correct area or individual;
- All staff will identify themselves when answering, giving both their name and section;
- Any callers who must be transferred will be advised of the reason for the transfer and the area or individual they are being transferred to. No caller should be transferred more than once during one phone call; and
- Voicemail messages will be updated regularly. Staff will respond to voicemail messages within 1 working day of receipt.

eMail contact

- All emails requiring a response will be acknowledged within 1 working day of receipt;
- A full response will issue within 15 working days of receipt or, 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;
- An automated email response will issue where staff are out of the office; and
- A contact name, telephone number and email address will be included in all email correspondence.

Visiting the Department

- All visitors to the Department will be treated in a courteous manner and directed to their destination efficiently and promptly. Service Officers will contact the relevant staff member to alert them that their visitor has arrived;
- Visitors will be escorted to/from Reception at all times;
- Staff expecting visitors to the Department will inform the Service Officers in Reception and the Welcoming Pavillion in advance providing them with:
 - names of the visitors and the organisations they represent (if appropriate);
 - time and venue for meeting;

- contact name and telephone extension of the liaison officer in the Department for the visit; and
 - description of the meeting (using no abbreviations);
- We will ensure that our reception and meeting facilities are fully accessible for all our customers, comply with Health and Safety standards and are maintained to the highest standard; and
- We will ensure that tours of Government Buildings are conducted by informed, qualified guides in order to make your visit enjoyable.

Levels of service to expect when dealing with the Department

We recognise that different groups of customers will have different priorities when dealing with the Department and may require specific commitments regarding service levels.

Customers with Disabilities

- We will ensure that the needs of people with disabilities are identified and fully catered for. We will make every effort to ensure that access to all areas of our buildings and to all of our services is maintained for people with disabilities and others with specific needs; and
- Any queries customers may have in relation to disability issues or physical access can be dealt with by the Disability Liaison Officer or the Access Officer in the Department (see contact details below).

Suppliers

- We will operate clear, impartial and transparent tendering and purchasing procedures in accordance with Public Procurement Guidelines; and
- We will ensure that payments to suppliers are made in accordance with applicable Prompt Payment legislation and regulations.

Service through Irish

- We will make every effort to accommodate customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish;
- We are committed to meeting our obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003 and, in particular, the commitments outlined in the [Department's Official Languages Scheme](#).

Websites/Publications

- The Department has responsibility for websites which are designed to provide information on the Taoiseach, the Government and on the Department and its

activities. We are committed to the ongoing maintenance and development of our websites to ensure that they are accessible, informative and up to date;

- We will ensure that our publications are clear, address user needs and are available on our websites.

How your input can contribute to the improvement of our services

We welcome and value your comments and suggestions on all aspects of our services. This allows us to tailor our services to fully meet your needs and serve you better. You can make a contribution to this process:

- Inform us of your views, comments or suggestions by email at customer.service@taoiseach.gov.ie. Tell us about the level of service you feel you have received, particularly if you feel that it failed to reach the standard you expected; and
- You can help us to help you by participating in any customer survey material we send you and sharing your views and comments.

Customer Complaints Procedure

If you are unhappy with the service you have received and if the issue cannot be resolved to your satisfaction with the staff member or section you have been dealing with, you can make a formal complaint to the Quality Customer Service Officer (see contact details below).

The Quality Customer Service Officer will deal with your complaint properly, fairly and impartially in accordance with our **Customer Complaints Procedure**. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation by the Customer Service Officer, you have the right of appeal to the Head of Corporate Affairs.

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

Freedom of Information

The Department of the Taoiseach complies fully with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. We will make every effort to provide you with as much information as possible informally, without resort to the terms of the Act. However, should you wish to make a formal request under the Act, you should email the [Freedom of Information Unit](#), Tel: (01) 619 4504. Guidance on accessing information under the Act is available on our website.

Statutory Obligations

The Department of the Taoiseach 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 the Taoiseach are Monday to Thursday 9:00am to 5:45pm and Friday 9:00am to 5:15pm.

Department Address	Department of the Taoiseach Government Buildings Upper Merrion Street D02 R583
Telephone Number	(01) 619 4000 (Main Switchboard)
Department email address	webmaster@taoiseach.gov.ie , gaeilge@taoiseach.gov.ie
Disability Liaison Officer	(01) 619 4505 disabilityliaisonofficer@taoiseach.gov.ie
Access Officer	(01) 619 4411 accessofficer@taoiseach.gov.ie
Quality Customer Service Officer	(01) 619 4411 (Telephone) customer.service@taoiseach.gov.ie
Queries in Irish	(01) 619 4261 gaeilge@taoiseach.gov.ie