



An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

Quality Customer Service

Customer Action Plan and Charter

2021 – 2023

June 2021

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Department of Finance

As stated in the Department's Statement of Strategy 2021-2023, the Department of Finance has a central role in the achievement of the Government's economic, fiscal, banking, financial services, EU, international and climate action objectives.

In advising and supporting the Government, the Department is guided by its mission:



To lead in the achievement of the Government's economic, fiscal and financial policy goals, having regard to the goals set out in the Programme for Government - Our Shared Future

1.2 Organisation Structure

The Department is comprised of a number of Divisions. A summary of the Divisions and the work of the Department is set out below.

Economics Division

The Economics Division is responsible for macroeconomic analysis, forecasting and budgetary policy. It is also responsible for developing strategies for the Irish economy and inputting to the development of sectoral and other policies that affect the economy. It undertakes research and provides advice on the impact of taxation and other policies. This Division also deals with overall budgetary policy, including coordinating the budgetary process within the European Semester, fiscal forecasting, monitoring budget performance, analysing the impact of policy on Government finances and liaising with the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council.

The Division is responsible for maintaining and managing the Exchequer Account (which is aggregated in the production of the Annual Finance Accounts and monthly Exchequer Statement) and the Government Banking Service.

Tax Division

The Tax Division is responsible for all aspects of tax policy, domestic and international. It works closely with the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the EU on

tax matters. It analyses policy proposals and drafts and prepares legislation, including the Finance Bill.

EU and International Division

The EU and International Division deals with the development and implementation of strategies at EU/Euro area level and internationally in relation to economic, fiscal and financial policy formulation and the cross-Departmental coordination of EU policy. It manages the EU budgetary process and EU economic governance and the development of Departmental policy advice on issues relating to UK/EU relationship. It also builds relationships through Ireland's diplomatic network and ensures that the Minister and Department are fully apprised of EU and international developments. The Division supports the Minister in his role as President of the Eurogroup.

Corporate Affairs (incl. Finance Unit & Facilities Management Unit)

Corporate Affairs is responsible for maintaining the Department's governance framework, the Integrated Business Planning framework, internal control framework of oversight for Bodies under the Aegis and the coordination and monitoring of Data Governance and Information management. Responsibility also includes Secretary to the Executive Board and having responsibility for the Finance Unit which manages the internal finance and budget management activities for the Department. The Facilities Management Unit is responsible for the on-going day-to-day operations to support the Department through management of accommodation and facilities for the provision of safe accommodation and welfare facilities and maintenance of the Safety Management System. It is also responsible for ensuring that all activities are carried out within the framework of the Safety Management System and Safety Statement.

Human Resources Unit

Human Resources is responsible for the development and delivery of the Department's HR Business strategy and the provision of a wide range of HR services to management and staff. The Department's HR Business strategy is focused on five key elements; Organisational Structure, Workforce and Succession Planning, Organisational Learning and Development, Performance Management and Employee Engagement initiatives.

Banking Division

The Banking Division deals with strategies for the banking and payment sectors in Ireland, policies relating to the provision of credit in the economy, credit and payments regulation, consumer protection, addressing distressed mortgages and difficulties with personal and small/medium business debt. It is responsible for

policies on Central Bank powers and functions and NTMA managed funding and investment strategies (e.g. NewEra or the ISIF). It is also responsible for the management of the Minister's shareholding in the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland.

Financial Service Division

The Financial Services Division is responsible for the development of domestic and EU/International policy and legislation in relation to the financial services sector, with the exception of the banking sector, and manages the transposition of EU directives. Its primary functions relate to insurance and pensions, funds, financial markets, anti-money laundering policy and the International Financial Services Strategy.

Shareholding and Financial Advisory Division

The Shareholding and Financial Advisory Division (SFAD) is responsible for the management of the State's investments in the banking sector (Allied Irish Banks, Bank of Ireland and Permanent TSB). It is also responsible for the management of the Minister's shareholdings in the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) and Home Building Finance Ireland (HBFI), representing the Minister's interests in relation to the oversight of NAMA in line with the NAMA Act. SFAD is responsible for representing the Minister's interests in relation to the liquidation of IBRC. This Division advises the Ministers in relation to the Credit Union sector. Finally, using the expertise within the Division, it provides financial advisory services to the wider Department as required.

Climate and International Finance Division

The Climate and International Finance Division is responsible for managing Ireland's relationship with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the Department's role in Climate Change and Climate Finance. The IFIs include the IMF, World Bank Group, European Investment Bank (EIB) and other multilateral development banks. This Division is responsible for the Department's Risk Management Framework in line with the governance structure. The Division will, where appropriate, align and co-ordinate with National Risk Assessment structure. The Compliance Unit provides assurance to the Executive Board, and ultimately to the Secretary General, that the Department is operating within its legal and regulatory framework.

Legal Unit

The Legal Unit is responsible for providing legal advisory services for the Department through the Head of Legal.

Accounts Branch

The Accounts Branch is responsible for transaction processing on the Department's Vote and also for five of the Votes in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (PER) group.

2 Customer Charter

This Customer Charter sets out the level of service customers can expect when dealing with the Department. Our Customer Action Plan, which sets this out in more detail, is available on our website www.finance.gov.ie

Customer Commitments

Level of service to expect when contacting or visiting the Department, we will:

- Treat you equally, with courtesy and respect
- Ensure our services are fully accessible
- Conduct business through Irish, where requested
- Apply the highest standards of integrity
- Be open, consultative and listen to and consider the opinions of others
- Foster the trust of the public through quality service and good communication

Monitoring and Evaluation

Our customer service performance is monitored and measured against the 12 Principles for Quality Customer Service, our commitments as set out in our Customer Action Plan (Section 3) and the number of complaints we receive.

What to Expect When You Contact Us

We manage Government finances and play a central role in the achievement of the Government's economic, fiscal, banking, financial services, EU, international and climate action objectives, having regard to the goals set out in the Programme for Government - Our Shared Future.

We deliver policy in as open a way as possible, consistent with the law, and through the regular and timely publication of internal technical studies, policy reviews and other relevant papers.

We ensure the material on our website www.finance.gov.ie is up-to-date and accessible.

Contact by letter or email

- Where appropriate, we will acknowledge all written correspondence within 5 working days of receipt.
- We will ensure that complaints are investigated and a reply issued within 20 working days
- Contact name, telephone number and/or email address will be included on replies

Contact by phone

- We will answer telephone calls promptly, giving our name and area of work
- As far as possible no caller will be transferred more than once during a single telephone call
- If we cannot deal with your query immediately, we will take your details and call you back as soon as possible

Visitors to our Offices

- All visitors will be treated with respect and courtesy and provided with a visitor badge as necessary
- We will ensure that our reception and meeting facilities are clean, accessible and maintained to a high standard
- Staff expecting callers will notify reception

How we deal with you

- We will make every effort to ensure that customers with specific needs are catered for in all our service delivery
- We will make every effort to accommodate customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish.
- We will write in clear language and if we use technical terms, they will be explained

Help us to Help You

To help us deal with your query, please treat our staff with courtesy and respect and provide the following details:

- Your name, address and e-mail address
- Full and accurate information relating to your query
- A daytime telephone number

Feedback

We welcome and encourage feedback on any aspect of our services. To help you do this, we will provide freepost comment cards in all reception areas or you can contact us by email at customer.service@finance.gov.ie

Compliments, Comments and Complaints

We welcome and **encourage feedback** on any aspect of our services.

If you are **unhappy with the service** you receive, you can:

- make a complaint to the section you are dealing with, or
- address your complaint to the Customer Service Officer

We will deal with your complaint promptly, fairly, and impartially. Please provide your contact details and full information relating to your complaint

We will acknowledge all complaints within **5 working days**

We will investigate and reply to your complaint within 20 working days. Or where this is not possible, an interim response will issue.

How to Submit a Compliment, Comment or Complaint

Visit the **Contact Us** area of our website www.finance.gov.ie

Email customer.service@finance.gov.ie

Complete a feedback card, available from any of our reception areas.

3 Customer Action Plan

The Department is committed to providing the highest level of service in accordance with the 12 Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service.

Our targets, as set out in this Customer Service Action Plan, follow the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) model. **They do not however, create any legal rights for customers.**

3.1 Our Commitments to the Guiding Principles

Principle	Our Commitment
1. Quality Service Standards	
Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which customer can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our Customer Charter, Customer Service Action Plan and Complaints Procedure will be available on our website, with copies of the Customer Charter available at main reception points.
2. Equality/Diversity	
Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community). Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will ensure that a focus on equality/diversity is maintained throughout the Department. We will ensure that all customers are treated equally and in accordance with relevant legislation.

3. Physical Access

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

- We will provide clean, comfortable, accessible accommodation and comply with occupational and safety standards for all customers.
- Any difficulties in relation to access should be directed to the Access Officer (Buildings).
- Health and Safety legislation will be complied with.
- Covid-19 safety guidelines will be adhered to and relevant precautions are implemented as necessary.

4. Information

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication.

Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

- We will ensure all information provided by the Department is clear, timely, accurate and accessible to our customers in a form that is suitable.
- We will publish as much of this information on our website as possible.
- We will ensure that our website conforms to web accessibility guidelines.
- We will make every effort to ensure that information is made available in as many different formats as practical, including via open data portals.

5. Timeliness and Courtesy

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

- We will ensure that all customers are treated with courtesy and that all enquiries are dealt with promptly and efficiently.
- We will ensure that all staff provide their name and section when answering telephone calls.
- We will ensure that voicemail is activated when necessary and that voicemail messages are responded to where possible within one working day of receipt.
- We will ensure that contact details are provided on all written or e-mail communications from the Department.

6. Complaints

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

- We have a clear complaints procedure in place (Section 5) and this is available at reception points and on our website.
- We will ensure that all complaints are acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt and are treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- We will ensure that complaints are investigated and a reply issued within 20 working days.

7. Appeals

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

- Details of how to appeal decisions are set out in our complaints procedure (Section 5).
- The number of appeals during any year will be recorded and published in our Annual Review.

8. Consultation and Evaluation

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

- Customers are welcome to submit views and comments through the Quality Customer Service officer (customer.service@finance.gov.ie).
- Details of our progress in relation to the operation of the Department and customer service will be published in our Annual Review.

9. Choice

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

- Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times.
- We will use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality delivery of service.

10. Official Languages Equality

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

- We will publish our Irish Language Scheme.
- We will encourage staff to participate in Irish Language courses.
- We will publish selected documents (as set out in our Irish Language Scheme) in both Irish and English as outlined under our Irish Language Scheme.
- We will endeavour to have staff available to deal with any queries in Irish.
- We will comply with our obligations under the Irish Sign Language Act, 2017

11. Better Coordination

Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

- We will encourage the coordination and integration of service delivery.

12. Internal Customers

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

- We will provide the same level of service internally to our colleagues as we do to our external customers.

3.2 Level of Service

3.2.1 Customers with specific needs

- We will make every effort to ensure that customers with specific needs are catered for in all our service delivery.
- Queries relating to disability or access issues should be directed to the Disability Liaison Officer (see Section 4 *How to contact us* page 16) or the Department's Access Officers as appropriate

3.2.2 Suppliers

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

3.2.3 Service through Irish

- We will make every effort to accommodate customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish.
- Correspondence received in Irish will be answered in Irish.
- We are committed to meeting our obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003 (as amended), and, in particular, the commitments outlined in the Department's Official Languages Scheme (2018-2021).

3.2.4 Service through Irish Sign Language

- The Irish Sign Language Act, 2017 recognises Irish Sign Language as a native language of the State and provides that the 'community of persons using Irish Sign Language shall have the right to use, develop and preserve Irish Sign Language'.
- Section 6 of the Act places obligations on all public bodies, including:
 - A public body shall do all that is reasonable to ensure that interpretation into Irish Sign Language is provided for a person who is competent in that language and cannot hear or understand English or Irish when that person is seeking to avail of or access statutory entitlements or services provided by or under statute by that public body.
 - The provision of interpretation shall be at no cost to the person concerned.
 - Provision of or availing of a remote, web-based service shall, if the Irish Sign Language user consents, be sufficient to meet the obligations of a public body under this section.

3.2.5 Website/Social Media/Publications

- The Department is committed to the ongoing maintenance and development of our **website** to ensure it is accessible, informative and up-to-date.
- We are also committed to using social media as much as possible to meet the varying needs of our customers. The Department has a presence on:
 - **Twitter**
 - **LinkedIn**
- We will ensure that our publications are clear, address user needs and are available on our website.

3.2.6 Freedom of Information

The Department complies fully with Freedom of Information legislation. 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 contact the Freedom of Information Unit.
- A guide to accessing information under the Freedom of Information Acts is available on our **website**.

3.2.7 Statutory Obligations

- The Department is fully committed to fulfilling all relevant statutory obligations including Data Protection, Language, Equality, Freedom of Information, Prompt Payment of Accounts, and Safety, Health & Welfare at Work.

3.3 External Customers

External customers of the Department of Finance include:

- Members of the public
- Members of the Oireachtas and other public representatives
- Other Government Departments, public bodies and European institutions
- A range of stakeholders from outside the Public Service including employers and representative bodies

3.4 Internal Customers

The Department's staff are recognised as internal customers. This is covered by Principle 12 of our commitments.

3.5 Covid-19 Measures for Visitors

The Department of Finance recognises the seriousness of Covid-19 and is continuously monitoring the outbreak and its impacts. It is the Department's policy to ensure the safety and protection of its employees, including visitors and contractors to its premises. The situation is constantly evolving, the advice of Government is under regular review and any actions taken and measures implemented are subject to revision in light of updates and/or changes.

Prior to entering the premises, all visitors are required to report to the front desk reception, whereby they must complete and sign a Covid-19 Visitor Declaration Form. The form requires visitors to declare if they have symptoms of Covid-19 and requests contact details for contact tracing purposes. All visitors must adhere to Infection Prevention Control measures implemented by the Department of Finance.

4 How to Contact Us

4.1 Main Contacts

Office opening hours: Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 5.45pm and Friday 9.00am to 5.30pm

	Main Address Department of Finance Government Buildings Upper Merrion Street Dublin 2 D02 R583	Other Locations 14 - 16 Upper Merrion Street, Dublin 2, D02 K728 7 - 9 Merrion Row, Dublin 2, D02 V223 Block 1, Miesian Plaza, 50 - 58 Lower Baggot Street, Dublin 2, D02 XW14 Central Business Park – Block 2, Clonminch Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, R35 W7A4
	www.gov.ie/finance	
	webmaster@finance.gov.ie pressoffice@finance.gov.ie	
	Phone: +353 1 676 7571 Fax: +353 1 678 9936	

4.2 Other contacts

	Customer Service Officer customer.service@finance.gov.ie	Rachel Murphy
	Access Officer (Information) Rachel.Murphy@finance.gov.ie	Rachel Murphy
	Access Officer (Services and Buildings) Gillian.McGuire@finance.gov.ie	Gillian McGuire

	<p>Freedom of Information Unit Email foi@finance.gov.ie Telephone +353 1 604 5044</p>	<p>James Hargis</p>
	<p>Disability Liaison Officer disabilityliaisonofficer@finance.gov.ie</p>	<p>John Mullally</p>

5 Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint?

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the provision of a service or services by the Department, as laid out under the commitments in our Customer Charter (Section 2) and Customer Service Action Plan (Section 3).

How to make a complaint

If you have a cause for complaint, it should be directed initially to the relevant section of the Department. Staff there will try to deal with the issue without delay or, if the complaint does not relate to a service provided by us, direct you to the appropriate body. If you do not know the name of the person in the section to contact, or if you are unsure which body you should make your complaint to the Customer Service Officer.

If the staff of the section cannot resolve your complaint, or you are unhappy with their response, you can make a formal complaint to the Customer Service Officer, who will investigate the complaint on your behalf.

You can make a complaint in person, by telephone, in writing or by e-mail (see Section 4 for contact details).

Information needed

The investigation of your complaint will be helped by providing the following details:

- Your name, address and e-mail address.
- Exactly what you were dissatisfied with.
- The name of the official or section you dealt with.
- A daytime telephone number.

Our commitments when dealing with Formal Complaints

- We will acknowledge all complaints within five working days.
- We will investigate all complaints and issue a reply to your complaint within 20 working days or, where this is not possible, an interim reply will issue explaining the position and advising when a substantive response will issue.
- All complaints will be treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- We will keep records of complaints separate from other records.
- We will ensure that no complaint you have made in good faith will be used to your disadvantage in the future.

- We will endeavor to learn from mistakes to ensure that errors are not repeated.

Appeal Process

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation by the Customer Service Officer, the matter may be appealed to Ms. Scline Scott. The deadlines for responding to appeals will be the same as those for formal complaints (as outlined above).

Details	Scline Scott Department of Finance Government Buildings Upper Merrion Street Dublin 2 D02 R583
Email	scline.scott@finance.gov.ie

If the matter is still not resolved

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you have a right to appeal to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the Government and the service is free.

Details	Office of the Ombudsman, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773
Telephone Number	+353 1 639 5600
Website	www.ombudsman.ie
Email	complaints@ombudsman.ie

Nothing in this complaints procedure affects your statutory rights under Freedom of Information, Data Protection, or other relevant legislation.

5.1 Complaints Process





An Roinn Airgeadais
Department of Finance

Tithe an Rialtas. Sráid Mhuirfean Uacht,
Baile Átha Cliath 2, D02 R583, Éire
Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2, D02 R583, Ireland

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