



An Bord Parúil
The Parole Board

Customer Service Action Plan 2022-2025



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1 The Parole Board and its Customers

The delivery of effective, quality customer service is a priority for the Parole Board.

The purpose of this Customer Action Plan, and the Customer Charter that accompanies it, is to set out in clear terms how we intend to ensure that we are providing our customers with the highest possible level of service during the period 2022-2025.

This Plan outlines our commitment to the provision and delivery of customer service and how our performance in this respect will be measured and evaluated.

2 Functions of the Parole Board

In line with the provisions of the Parole Act 2019, the principal functions of the Parole Board are to:

- Decide on applications for parole from relevant persons and where appropriate to make parole orders, to vary parole orders or to revoke parole orders in respect of such applications;
- Provide information to the Minister for Justice on the Board's functions and make recommendations to the Minister, upon his or her request, to assist the Minister in coordinating and making policy in relation to the release of persons from prison on parole;
- Provide information to persons serving sentences of imprisonment, victims of crime, and members of the public, on the functions of the Board;
- Publish information, including statistical information, concerning the Parole Board's activities;
- Provide advice, or make proposals, to the Minister on matters relating to the functions of the Parole Board;
- Undertake, commission, or assist in research projects and other activities related to the release of persons from prison on parole which may assist the Board in exercising its functions and make recommendations to the Minister arising from those projects or activities.

3 Customers of the Parole Board

The Parole Board is committed to providing a quality service to meet the needs of its customers. External customers of the Parole Board include:

Parole Applicants:

The Parole Board will:

- give you notice of the date and time of your meeting with the Board to discuss your parole application or revocation/variation of a Parole Order;
- try to meet any special needs you have because of a medical condition or disability that you have told us about;
- give you the opportunity to fully explain your case;
- provide you with legal representation, if requested;
- where possible provide an interpreter, if requested;
- assess your case fairly and independently;
- make a decision about your application or the revocation or variation of your Parole Order as soon as possible after your meeting;
- write to you providing details of the decision.

Further information on the parole process for parole applicants is available from the Board, the Irish Prison Service and online at www.gov.ie/paroleboard

Victims

If you are a registered victim and you are making a submission on a parole application the Board will;

- acknowledge receipt of your submission within 5 working days;
- give you notice of the date and time of your meeting if you are making a submission in person;
- try to meet any special needs you have because of a medical condition or disability that you have told us about;
- give you the opportunity to provide your submission to the Board;
- provide you with access to legal representation, if requested;
- if possible provide you with an interpreter for your meeting, if requested;
- write to you and inform you of the Parole Board's decision.

General public

The Board will ensure that its website:

- is kept updated;
- is accessible to people with disabilities;
- features relevant and up to date information for our customers and the organisations we interact with.

Other Departments and Government Agencies

The Board will work with other Departments and Government agencies to improve co-ordination on service provision and delivery.

The Secretariat (staff) to the Parole Board are internal customers and it is important that the internal customer is acknowledged (See Principle 12 in the following section).

4 Quality Customer Service

There are 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service for customers and clients of the Public Service. The Parole Board is wholly committed to providing the highest levels of service to all our customers in accordance with those principles.

The 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service:

1. **Quality Service Standards:** Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which the customer can expect, and publish it on our website.
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.

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

6. **Complaints:** Maintain a well-publicised, accessible and transparent system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.
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.
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.
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.
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.
11. **Better Co-ordination:** Foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.
12. **Internal Customer:** Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

5 Measuring and Evaluating Performance

The Parole Board will endeavour to meet the quality customer service targets set in our Customer Charter to ensure that we continue to deliver the highest levels of service to our customers.

In monitoring our performance, we will:

- Seek feedback and suggestions from our customers on ways in which we can enhance our service provision and delivery.
- Use internal management information systems to inform our customer service policies.
- Ensure full compliance with all applicable Health and Safety standards and regulations.

6 Service Standards and Performance Indicators

Our Customer Charter outlines in broad terms the level of service all customers of the Parole Board can expect. To ensure that we can meet the commitments in our Charter, it is important that customers are made aware of the procedures and processes we use. These are defined as our Service Standards and are set out below. To further underpin our commitment to deliver the highest quality of service, the Board will use these Standards as performance indicators in measuring and evaluating our performance.

Quality Service

- Ensure that all customers are kept fully informed of the standards of service they can expect to receive from us, through the availability of our Customer Charter in all our offices.
- Ensure that copies of the Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan are made available to customers who wish to have a copy.
- Ensure that the Customer Charter and Action Plan are available on the Board's website.

Equality / Diversity

- Ensure that a focus on equality/diversity issues is maintained throughout the Board.
- Ensure that all customers are treated equally and in accordance with relevant legislation.
- Ensure that the needs of staff and visitors with disabilities are identified and fully catered for. For queries in relation to disability issues, customers can e-mail info@paroleboard.gov.ie or phone: (01) 474 8767

Physical Access

- Ensure that full access to all areas of all our buildings is maintained for people with disabilities and any other customers with specific needs.
- Ensure that all areas of our buildings are clean, comfortable and comply with occupational and safety standards.
- To ensure that any issues or difficulties in relation to physical access can be addressed without delay, customers can telephone the Access Officer in the Secretariat, Email: info@paroleboard.gov.ie Phone: (01) 474 8767.

Information

- Ensure that all information provided by the Board is clear, timely, accurate and fully accessible for any customers with specific needs.
- Ensure that material on Board's website follows all web publication guidelines in terms of accessibility and official languages equality.
- Ensure that our information distribution channels are kept as up-to-date as possible and that these channels maintain pace with the most recent technological developments and innovations in media and communications.
- Make every effort to ensure that information is made available in as many different formats as practicable.

Timeliness and Courtesy

- Ensure that all customers are treated with courtesy and that all enquiries are dealt with promptly and efficiently.
- Ensure that all staff provide their names when answering telephone calls.
- Ensure that full contact details are provided on all written or email communication from the Board.

Complaints

- Ensure that all complaints are treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- Ensure that all complaints are acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt.
- Ensure that all complaints are investigated fully and that a reply to a complaint is issued within 20 working days. 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.
- Our Customer Complaints Procedure is available on our website www.gov.ie/paroleboard

Please note that this complaints procedure does not apply to decisions about parole applications.

Appeals

- The Parole Board maintains a formalised system of appeal for customers who are dissatisfied. Customers who are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation by the Customer Service Officer have the option of appeal to a senior officer.
- Nothing in this appeals procedure affects statutory rights under Freedom of Information, Data Protection or any other relevant legislation.

Consultation

- Be proactive in consulting with its customers and will continue to build on this over the period of this Action Plan. Consultation provides an important mechanism through which we can monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of our customer service delivery and ensure that the service continues to meet the needs of our customers into the future.
- Develop and enhance existing structures for consultation and external evaluation during the life of the Plan.
- Liaise bilaterally or otherwise with particular interest groups on issues of mutual interest.

Choice

- Ensure the availability of multiple contact options for the Board, including a range of telephone numbers, e-mail and website.
- Ensure that the Board makes full use of new and emerging technologies to broaden the choice of channels available to customers.

Official Languages Equality

- Ensure that every effort is made to cater for callers who may wish to be dealt with 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.
- Ensure that the Strategy Statement and other information publications and key policy documents produced by or on behalf of the Board continue to be made available in both Irish and English.
- Encourage a focus on Irish language training courses in staff development programmes.

Better Co-ordination

- Work with other Departments and Government Agencies to improve co-ordination on service provision and delivery.
- Ensure broad dissemination of information regarding our policies and procedures to other relevant Government agencies.
- Liaise with other agencies as necessary, including the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service, in order to address co-ordination issues and to pool expertise as appropriate.
- Keep staff aware of significant developments in other agencies with possible implications for our work through our Internal Communications strategy.
- Publicise, within the Parole Board, developments in the broader public sector and aim to ensure that Civil Service wide schemes and initiatives are made available to staff in line with best practice, organisational needs permitting.

Internal Customer

- Ensure that a module on internal customer service is included as a key part of all Customer Service training and induction courses.
- Ensure that the training and development needs of each staff member are provided for through the implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).
- Ensure the development of more effective internal channels of communication to allow staff to gain a fuller understanding of all aspects of the role of the Board.

7 Training

All staff of the Secretariat to the Board shall receive the necessary training required to provide a good quality customer service in line with our Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan.

8 Statutory Obligations

In addition to undertakings given in our Customer Action Plan and Customer Charter, the Parole Board 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 and Welfare at Work.

In accordance with the [Disability Act 2005](#) , the Parole Board's Access Officer is Mr Stephen Nolan.

The Access Officer is responsible for providing, arranging or co-ordinating assistance to persons with disabilities who wish to access the services provided by the Parole Board.

The Access Officer also acts as a person of contact for persons with disabilities who wish to access such services.

Access Officer: Stephen Nolan
Address: Suite 401,
The Capel Building,
Mary's Abbey,
Dublin 7
D07 N4C6
Email: info@paroleboard.gov.ie
Phone number: [\(01\) 474 8437](tel:(01)4748437)

9 How to Contact Us

Address: The Parole Board
Suite 401
The Capel Building
Mary's Abbey
Dublin 7
D07 N4C6

Phone: 01-4748767
01-4748770

Email: info@paroleboard.gov.ie

Website: www.gov.ie/paroleboard