



**Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform Customer Service
Action Plan 2009 – 2011**



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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM
AN ROINN DLÍ COMHIONANNAIS AGUS ATHCHÓURITHE DLÍ

SECRETARY GENERAL'S FOREWORD

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is entrusted with one of the State's most important and fundamental responsibilities - to support our society by maintaining law and order in all communities and promoting fairness and safety for all our people. The Department does this by overseeing the operation of the law and order system, and developing new policies and legislation that improve the safety and quality of life of the law abiding public. In short, the purpose of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is to work unrelentingly for a safer and fairer Ireland.

I want to emphasise the Department's commitment to providing a professional, efficient and accessible service to all our customers. This is a core function of the Department and we undertake to deliver on this commitment by keeping the principles of *Quality Customer Service* at the centre of everything we do and by ensuring continuous improvements and enhancements to the standard and quality of the public service we provide.

This Action Plan sets out how we will work to deliver a high quality, professional service to our customers. In doing so, the Action Plan builds on the achievements of previous plans and specifies how we plan to implement the Department's Customer Charter commitments over the next two years.

Central to the Action Plan is the continual assessment and review of the implementation and delivery of our services which is crucial if the Department is to meet, resolutely and swiftly, changing needs, demands and circumstances. In this context we will always take account of the requirements of our customers and through consultation we will seek to understand the needs and expectations of the individuals, organisations and communities we serve.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my colleagues, the staff of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform for the dedication I have witnessed in the years I have worked here with them in delivering and maintaining the highest standard of public service. I have seen their commitment and dedication to the common good especially at the most difficult times and when under immense pressure. Law, Order, Justice and the promotion of fairness and safety for all our people remains our top priority. We are dedicated to that purpose and it is our collective commitment to the Irish people.

[Seán Aylward](#)

[Secretary General](#)

1. CUSTOMER SERVICE MISSION STATEMENT

Our Customers and Clients

The customers and clients of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform are drawn from all sections of society and walks of life, both law abiding and those who come into contact with the Law for the wrong reasons. Indeed the Department has a very unique customer and client base which include individual members of the public, other Government Departments and Agencies, International Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and many more. Indeed because of the diverse nature of our customer and client base, it can be both demanding and difficult to ensure a service which is both firm and fair. However, our overall commitment to all of our customers and clients is to provide a professional, efficient and courteous service. We are also committed to maintaining a high standard of customer service across all areas of the Department and, as opportunities present themselves, to taking further actions to improve the level of service we provide.

During the period 2009 – 2011, our commitment to Customer Service will continue and will be strengthened, in particular, by way of the following:

(a) The Customer Service Officer

The Department will ensure that the appropriate structures are in place to deal with all comments and complaints that customers may wish to make.

The Department's Customer Service Officer is Mr. Gerry Shannon, Corporate Services. Mr. Shannon can be contacted by e-mail using the following address - customerservices@justice.ie. Complaints or comments in relation to the quality of customer service provided by the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) should be addressed to INIScustomercomplaints@justice.ie.

(b) Partnership

Management and Staff Representatives will continue to work together to ensure that the needs of the Department's customers are met through adequately supported customer service procedures. The Customer Action Plan 2009 – 2011 is endorsed by the Department's Partnership Committee.

(c) Equality/Diversity

The Department will respect the principles of equality and diversity of our customers in the delivery of all services. In our dealings with customers, we will ensure that their rights to equal treatment, as set out in equality legislation, are upheld.

(d) Annual Report

Developments under this Plan will be included in the Department's Annual Report.

(e) Freedom of Information

The Department will continue to meet its obligations under the Freedom of Information Acts.

2. SERVING THE CUSTOMER

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform is entrusted with one of the State's most important and fundamental responsibilities, which is to support society by maintaining law and order in all our communities and by promoting fairness for all our citizens. The Department achieves this objective by drafting and implementing legislation, formulating policy, overseeing the operation of the law and order system and supporting, by way of legislation and the operations of its associated bodies, the marginalised in Irish society.

These responsibilities impose an obligation on the Department to serve the State and the public to the best of its ability. A professional and fair approach to providing an efficient and accessible service to its customers forms a key part of that duty.

(a) Responsibilities

The Department actively seeks to ensure that our commitment to customer service delivery is reflected in all of the Department's areas of responsibility. The principal functions of the Department can be summarised as follows:

- Supporting An Garda Síochána and Tackling Crime – the Department will further advance law enforcement, crime prevention and community security by the continuing structural and service reform of An Garda Síochána and through the development of effective anti-crime policies, the implementation and enforcement of effective and balanced laws and working to ensure the visible policing of our communities.

- Developing Justice Services – the Department will continue to advance the structural and service reform of the justice services – criminal and other – in order to enable the Department and the Justice and Equality Sector organisation to implement their mandates in the most effective and efficient way possible.
- Provision of Immigration and Related Services – the Department will continue to implement Government commitments in relation to the provision of immigration, asylum and related services and to provide input as required where legislative change is necessary.
- Promotion of a Caring, Integrated and Equitable Society – the Department will promote the development of a caring and equitable society and co-ordinate, support and facilitate the integration of all legally resident immigrants into Irish society through the implementation of appropriate policies.
- Promotion of a Secure and Peaceful Society – the Department will continue to promote a secure and peaceful society through the provision of a wide range of justice services and we will continue to support the democratic institutions in Northern Ireland.
- Law Reform – the Department will continue to advise and assist the Minister in the development of legislative proposals, both criminal and civil, within the scope of the Minister’s remit and to support the Minister in the passage and in the implementation of this legislation.

- Business Delivery – the Department will support the delivery of the Department’s business objectives through optimising staff performance and development, providing a high quality working environment for staff and customers, maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance and through the effective use of resources.

3. OVERVIEW OF OUR CUSTOMERS

The vast majority of the Department's customers, the general public, do not come into direct contact with the Department. However, the work of the Department does impact on their day to day lives to varying degrees.

The Department's customers include:

- Members of the Oireachtas,
- The Judiciary,
- Staff of the Department and its Offices and Agencies,
- Gardaí,
- Prison Officers,
- Retired Staff,
- Non-Governmental Organisations,
- Members of the Legal Profession,
- The Media,
- Crime Victims,
- Prisoners and their families,
- Non-Irish Nationals applying for Admission/ Residence, Citizenship and Asylum,

- Destitute EU nationals wishing to return home,
- Staff Representatives,
- Other Government Departments and Offices,
- Local Authorities,
- Health and Safety Authority,
- Explosives Industry,
- Students,
- Commercial organisations,
- The Social Partners (including Community and Voluntary Organisations),
- Regional Assemblies,
- Staff and Children in Detention Schools and their families,
- County Development Boards,
- The Probation Service, and
- Central Authorities in Member States of the European Union.

In addition, flowing from its international contacts and obligations the Department's customer base extends beyond the State. These 'international' customers include:

E.U. Institutions,

- United Nations Institutions,
- Council of Europe,
- Hague Conference on Private International Law, and
- Other International interest groups.

4. CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITMENT

Staff in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform are committed to serving the community and the individual citizen through the principles set out below:

(a) (i) Quality Service Standards

- The Department's Customer Charter outlines the nature and quality of service which our customers can expect. The Department is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all our customers. The Charter, along with the Customer Service Action Plan, is available on our website (www.justice.ie).
- The Department provides customer service training for staff, particularly those in regular contact with members of the general public. Training is customised to suit particular requirements in different parts of the Department.

(ii) Objective/Target:

- Ensure the Department's Customer Charter/Customer Service Action Plan is widely available.
- Publish the Department's Charter and Customer Service Action Plan on the Department's website.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the contents of both the Charter and the Plan and their obligations under each.
- Create awareness among all staff of the need for quality Customer Service and the diversity of customer needs.

- Suggest changes in organisational behaviour/practices which would contribute to improved customer service.

(iii) Performance Indicators:

- Customer Charter and Plan available on website in a prominent and easily accessible location.
- Staff made fully aware of details of the Charter and Action Plan through Department circulars, training and Divisional staff briefings.
- Staff aware of the need for quality Customer Service and diversity of customer needs.
- Customer Service Training carried out.

(b) (i) Equality/Diversity

- The Department will promote the development of a caring and equitable society and will co-ordinate, support and facilitate the integration of all legally-resident immigrants into Irish society through the implementation of appropriate policies.
- The Department will continue to oversee implementation of the cross-Departmental National Women's Strategy 2007-2016.
- The Department also fully supports the work of the Office for Disability and Mental Health to deliver the Government's objectives in relation to the National Disability Strategy, the partnership agreement towards 2016 and international instruments.
- The Department is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to initiatives that promote equality and foster diversity to ensure a fair workplace for all.

(ii) Objective/Target:

- The Department will continue to secure the most effective, efficient and economic delivery of service in the area of equality and human rights to the public.
- The Department will continue to develop and implement policy in relation to equality, equality of opportunity and equal treatment on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community, particularly in the areas of employment, decision making, access to goods, facilities and services.
- The Department will continue to address the needs of relevant groups when formulating policy e.g. disability groups, mental health groups etc.
- Monitor equality of opportunity for all staff.
- Continue to promote the availability of family friendly policies for all staff.
- Continue to support the Equality Authority, the Equality Tribunal and the National Disability Authority.

(iii) Performance Indicators:

- Number of staff attending training/information sessions (e.g. induction courses/lunchtime courses).
- Number of complaints received regarding equality and diversity issues.
- Equality of Opportunity for all staff.

(c) (i) Physical Access

- The Department will continue to 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.
- The Department's Accessible Services Committee will continue to meet and will promote measures to enhance accessibility of services. This will be achieved by continuous monitoring and reviewing the services provided and where necessary by taking advice from various outside bodies.
- The Department promotes a workplace that includes people with disabilities and a new disability survey database will launch to better enable the Department to provide support to staff with disabilities.
- The Department's Access Officers are:-

Main Department's Access Officer:- Gerry Shannon -
Email:GJShannon@justice.ie ;
Telephone - 01 6028671

INIS Access Officer:- Christy Moore -
Email: CAMoore@justice.ie ; Telephone - 01-6167750.

(ii) Objective/Target:

- All public bodies, subject to certain considerations, are legally required to make a number of accessibility provisions under the Disability Act 2005. Therefore, work will continue, in relation to accessibility within the Justice sector buildings. This is an ongoing process.

- The Department's Accessible Services Committee, which includes the Disability Liaison Officer, will continue to meet, to ensure that accessibility issues are continually examined and addressed.
- As staff are customers also, awareness training is being undertaken in the promotion and integration of equality, diversity and disability awareness issues in the workplace.
- Health and Safety Statements in place for the Department.

(iii) Performance Indicators:

- Offices accessible to persons with physical disabilities. Ongoing - Work continuing in relation to accessibility within the Justice sector buildings.
- Up to date Health and Safety Statements in place and compliance with Health and Safety standards.
- Number of physical access related complaints.
- New Disability Survey database will be in place.
- Awareness training will take place.

(d) (i) Information

- Staff will continue to take a proactive approach in providing information that is easily accessible, timely and accurate and is available at all points of contact.
- The Department will provide training in the areas of disability, diversity and equality to enable staff to better understand customer needs.
- The Department's main website has been designed to comply with 'WAI Double A' compliance requirements.

Freedom of Information Officer in place.

(ii) Objective/Target:

- Staff will continue to update the Department's various websites to improve accessibility for all our customers.
- Staff trained to deal appropriately with customers.
- Correspondence answered in an easy- to- read and understandable format.
- Freedom of Information requests answered within the timeframe provided.

(iii) Performance Indicators:

- Websites updated regularly.
- Staff trained.
- Freedom of Information requests answered on time.

(e) (i) Timeliness and Courtesy

- Staff will deliver a quality customer service with courtesy, sensitivity and with minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between service provider and customer.
- The Department will ensure, as far as is practicable, the safety, health and welfare of its employees and customers who visit the Department.
- Correspondence and telephone queries responded to in line with the requirements laid down by the Department's Customer Charter.

Regarding the delivery of customer service in relation to the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS), See Page 28 of this Plan.

(ii) Objective/Target:

- It is our objective to deal with all our customers in a courteous and helpful manner without delay.
- Staff will be helpful to all customers who contact us. All visitors to the Department will be treated in a courteous manner and directed to their correct destination quickly.
- It is our target that customers will receive clear, timely and concise replies to all correspondence including e-mails.

(iii) Performance Indicators:

- Number of customer complaints received.
- All customers and staff will be protected by health and safety regulations.
- Correspondence and telephone queries responded to in line with the Department's Customer Charter.

(f) (i) Consultation and Evaluation

- Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation of, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure constant analysis and evaluation of service delivery.
- Staff will continue to facilitate our customers to evaluate the service we provide. Customers can contact the Customer Service Officer if they have a complaint or to make general comments in relation to the standard of customer service provided by the Department.
- The Department (through INIS) operates a formal consultation process in the area of immigration and related services with non

governmental organisations through its Customer Liaison Panel process. (See Appendix A attached for membership).

(ii) Objective/Target:

- Staff in the Department will continue to consult with customers where feasible and appropriate to ensure that services are delivered to the best standard possible.

(iii) Performance Indicators:

- Number of complaints and comments received by the Customer Service Officer.
- Range and number of opportunities offered to customers to evaluate the quality of service provided by the Department.
- Regular consultation with customers on a structured basis.
- Staff motivation strengthened by continued engagement in meaningful consultation.

(g) (i) Customer Choice

- The Department will continue to provide choice to our customers, where feasible and appropriate, in service delivery, such as payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours, phone services, websites, publications available and delivery times. The Department will continue to use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

(ii) Objective/Targets:

- Staff will continue to provide choice to customers in all areas of customer service.

- The Department will continue to take advantage of emerging technologies in providing choice to customers.

(iii) Performance Indicators:

- Customer will continue to have various choices available to contact the Department and can avail of the various choices.
- Websites updated.
- Various publications details on Website.

(h) (i) Official Languages Equality

- Staff in the Department will continue to be encouraged to participate in Irish language training programmes to provide them with the necessary skills to conduct services through Irish.

(ii) Objectives/Targets:

- The Department will make every effort to accommodate persons who wish to conduct their business through the medium of Irish.
- Training programmes will continue to help equip staff to deal with our Irish Language customers.

(iii) Performance Indicators

- Correspondence which has been received in Irish answered in Irish.
- Number of staff participating in Irish language training programmes.
- Extent to which information on the Department's website is available in Irish.
- Information in Irish available to Customers who require it.
- Number of language accessibility related complaints received.

(i) (i) Better Co-ordination

- The Department will continue to promote and encourage, throughout its activities, a more coordinated and integrated approach to the delivery of public services.

(ii) Objectives/Targets:

- Staff will continue to deliver a co-ordinated public service for all customers of the Department.

(iii) Performance Indicators

- Better delivery of Public Service
- Interdepartmental working groups and project teams in place to progress cross-cutting issues relating to the policy areas of more than one Government Department.

(j) (i) Internal Customer

- The Department recognises staff as internal customers and is committed to ensuring that, in our engagement with our colleagues, we provide a high quality service.

(ii) Objectives/Targets:

- Continue to promote and develop opportunities for staff aimed at supporting the achievements of the Department's business objectives.
- Support and develop Partnership in the Department and maintain a well managed industrial relations environment.
- Continue to develop a range of family friendly work options.

(iii) Performance Indicators

- Numbers of staff attending training courses and participating in further education opportunities.
- Number of staff continuing to avail of family friendly work options.
- Needs of internal customers continue to be met with high standards of timeliness, courtesy and consultation.
- A workplace which is free from bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

k(i) Comments/Complaints Procedures /Appeals

- The Department will ensure that a well publicised, accessible and transparent 'simple to use' system of appeal/review for all customers, who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services provision by the Department, remains in place.

(ii) Objective/Target:

- All complaints, including those covered by the Disability Act, 2005 will be acknowledged within 5 working days and an interim reply sent out within 10 working days. Our target is to have complaints, even those which need further investigation, dealt with and completed within 20 working days.
- Complaints procedures will be transparent and all complaints will be directed to, and acknowledged, by a named Officer of appropriate grade.

(iii) Performance Indicator:

- Complaints Officers and appeals procedure in place.
- Number of complaints received and dealt with within established timeframes.

5. PRINCIPLES FOR DEALING WITH CUSTOMERS

Principles for an Excellent Service

- providing timely and accurate information,
- personal respect,
- prompt attention,
- efficiency,
- clarity of decision,
- issue resolution/responsibility taking at point of contact,
- easy access to officials,
- good facilities for people with disabilities,
- courtesy,
- professionalism,
- observing confidentiality where appropriate,
- fairness,
- a high quality information service,
- formal complaints procedures, and
- effective methods of redress.

Different customers may have special requirements which arise from the nature of their particular relationship with the Department's service with which they are in contact. The Department recognises these particular needs and will integrate them into a planned programme.

6. KEY POINTS OF CONTACT

(a) Telephone

- The main telephone number for the Department is 00353 1 6028202. A “Lo-Call” number is also available to facilitate members of the public to contact the Department from any part of the country - 1890 221 227.
- Staff will continue to answer all calls promptly and courteously.
- Voice mail will be used with discretion - its purpose is to allow callers to leave a message outside normal office hours or if staff are unavoidably absent.
- If a staff member is unable to deal with a telephone query, he/she will transfer the call to a colleague who can deal with the query.

In addition to the telephone numbers listed, the telephone and other contact details for The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) can be found on their website, or by clicking the following URL <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/WP08000090>

(b) Correspondence – including Email and Fax Messages – General

Staff will reply to letters courteously and as quickly as possible and will continue to work towards achieving the following standards:

- Acknowledging all correspondence within 5 working days of receipt.
- Issuing a substantive response to all correspondence, requiring a detailed reply, within 20 working days of receipt, where the information required is available. Staff will, however, receive some correspondence which will require consultation with Offices/Agencies

associated with the Department, and/or considerable research of a legal nature, before a full response can be issued.

- If staff are unable to respond to correspondence within 20 working days, the Department will notify the sender and keep him/her informed of progress. This will be done by telephone, by e-mail or by letter.
- Staff will reply to e-mails by e-mail. E-mails requiring a response acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. Full response to all such e-mails within 20 working days of receipt or where not possible, an interim reply will issue explaining the position and advising when a substantive response is to issue. If however, the issue is of a confidential nature, the Department may reply by letter.
- Staff will use the 'Out of Office' e-mail message if out of the office for more than a day and will make sure to erase this e-mail message on their return.
- Written communications issuing from the Department will normally include the staff member's name, Division, reference number, telephone number and e-mail address (where relevant).
- All correspondence will be written in plain language, using technical and official terms only where it is absolutely necessary. All correspondence will, as much as possible, be kept short and to the point.
- Requirements for alternative formats of communication will be facilitated to the greatest extent possible.
- Under the 'Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information' the Department will ensure that contents of communications with people with disabilities are provided in an accessible format as far as is practicable.

(c) Personal Callers

Because of the unique and confidential nature of our work much of the Department's office premises are not open to the Public. However, where a member of the public is invited in to the Department's offices (e.g. to attend a meeting), the following should apply

- Reception and waiting room facilities will be maintained to acceptable standards of cleanliness and comfort.
- Existing buildings, with the assistance of OPW and other parties, will be made as accessible as possible to people with disabilities and new/refurbished offices will have accessibility issues dealt with as part of the fit out specifications.
- When personal callers arrive by prior appointment, an appropriate staff member will greet them punctually.
- Private office accommodation will be made available where callers may consult staff.

Staff of the Department in customer-facing roles meet with, interact with and provide services to our customers and clients on a daily basis. They bring the principles of this Action Plan to reality in their daily work.

They are faced with striking the appropriate balance, in often difficult and pressured situations, between fairness, firmness, customer service and service delivery, at a time when all resources are under pressure. We are constantly striving to improve our public service delivery. The Department will continue to support our front line staff in their important work which is fundamental to this Action Plan, through training and otherwise.

(d) Meetings

Meetings will be organised and conducted efficiently and effectively. Customers can expect proper meeting facilities, timely notification and advance circulation of clear and concise documentation where appropriate.

(e) Media Services

Staff of the Press Office will, where appropriate, provide members of the media with prompt and satisfactory responses to their queries.

(f) Suppliers

The Department will operate clear, impartial and transparent tendering/purchasing procedures. The Central Procurement Unit is now in place to monitor procurement procedures in the Department.

(g) Seirbhís Trí Ghaeilge

- Tabharfar freagra í nGaeilge ar chomhfreagras a gheofar í nGaeilge.
- Déanfar gach iarracht freastal ar fhiafraithe teileafóin i nGaeilge agus freastal ar dhaoine a thagann i láthair ar mian leo a ngnó a dhéanamh trí Ghaeilge.

(h) Service Through Irish

- Correspondence received in Irish will be answered in Irish,
- Every effort will be made to accommodate telephone callers and personal callers who wish to conduct their business through Irish.

(i) Freedom of Information

Under Freedom of Information (FOI) customers have a right to:-

- Access records held by a Government Department or public bodies.
- Request correction of personal information relating to a customer held by a Government Department or a public bodies.
- Obtain reasons for a decision made by a Government Department or public bodies where the decision affects a Customer.

A Customer has a right to ask for the following records held by a Department of public bodies:-

- Any records relating to a customer personally, whenever created
- All other records created after 21 April, 1998

A decision on an FOI application must normally be made within 20 working days. If a customer has a specific question on making an FOI request to this Department they may visit our Freedom of Information FAQ on the website www.justice.ie Customers can also visit www.foi.gov.ie for further information.

All requests under the FOI Acts should be addressed to:-

Freedom of Information Officer,

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,

Pinebrook House,

71 – 74 Harcourt Street,

Dublin 2.

Telephone: 00 353 1 6028202, extension 8408/8417

Lo Call: 18790 221 227, extension 8408/8417

Fax: 00 353 1 6028652

Email: foi@justice.ie

(j) The Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service

In the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service, (INIS) where the processing of large volumes of applications is involved, a balance must be struck between the work involved in the actual processing of the applications on the one hand and answering queries in relation to when the applications will be processed on the other hand. While every effort is made to facilitate customer queries, we believe that, when deciding on the allocation of resources, the balance should be in favour of processing applications.

In an effort to improve the quality of service provided by INIS to Oireachtas Members, a new service was established to provide responses to Oireachtas Members' queries, in relation to individual asylum and immigration cases. This Service commits to provide responses to queries from Oireachtas Members within ten working days, but in the majority of cases the responses issue within a much shorter timeframe.

(k) Reception and Integration Agency (RIA)

The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) is accessible through telephone, fax, email, website and post. The RIA also operates 'out of hours' services through appropriate contacts such as the 'Homeless Persons Unit' and An Garda Síochána.

The contact details for RIA are as follows:

Telephone Number: 00353 1 4183200

Fax No: 00353 1 4183271

Website: www.ria.gov.ie

(I) Office of the Minister for Integration

The Office of the Minister for Integration is also accessible through telephone, fax, email, website and post.

The Contact details for the Office are as follows:

Telephone Number: 00353 1 6473236

Fax No: 00353 1 6473119

E-mail: info@integration.ie

Website: www.integration.ie

Address: Office of the Mi

nister for Integration,

Dún Aimhirgin,

43 – 49 Mespil Road,

Dublin 4.

The Offices of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) and the Office of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (ORAT) can be contacted also by various different means. Please see details below.

Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC)

79 – 83 Lr. Mount Street,

Dublin 2.

Public Office Open 8.45 to 16.00 Monday to Friday.

(Ph. 00353 1 6028000, Lo call 1890 202 418) – Fax: 00353 1 6028122

Website: www.orac.ie Email – oracmail@orac.ie ,

A page dedicated to Customer Service can be accessed on the ORAC website and includes the organisation's Customer Charter, Customer Service Action Plan, Customer Service information leaflet and Customer Complaints Procedure. It also includes details of our Customer Service Surveys.

Office of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (ORAT) ,
6 – 7 Hanover Street,
Dublin 2.

(Ph. 00353 1 4748400, Lo call 1890 210 458).

Website: www.refappeal.ie Email – info@refappeal.ie

7. CUSTOMER SERVICE CONSULTATION

It is vitally important that services are and will remain relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the Department’s customers. Consultation is the key to understanding the needs and expectations of individuals and groups – internal and external to the organisation.

(a) Informal Consultation

All Divisions of the Department will continue to engage in informal consultations with both internal and external customers with a view to providing the most efficient and effective service possible.

(b) Formal Consultation

The Department will continue to liaise formally with its customers. This can take the form of Market Research, when various customers are asked, through questionnaires and telephone calls, their customer satisfaction in relation to a particular service which the Department provides. A further way the Department liaises with its customers is through the use of conferences which facilitate the Department in understanding its customers requirements and to brief its customers as to the service(s) it can provide. The Department staff also meet formally with its customers through regular meetings.

Staff of the Department meet stakeholder organisations and establish working relationships and contacts and clarify issues and responsibilities. For example, this applies to the area of ‘Anti Human Trafficking Unit’ who has developed ongoing consultation structures including five working groups. Similarly, the ‘Office for Internet Safety’ has established the Internet Safety Advisory Council to ensure ongoing engagement with stakeholders in its field of activity. The unit continues to make personal contact with key personnel of NGOs, Government Agencies and International Organisations outside of these formal structures and is committed to full and effective participation with national and international stakeholders.

Disability Equality Unit works closely through regular meetings with the National Disability Authority (NDA). The Senior Officials Group on Disability, which reports to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion, also meets and monitors progress on the implementation of the National Disability Strategy. Disability Stakeholders have provided an input into the process of formulating disability legislation. Under the Government’s partnership agreement, ‘Towards 2016’, a national Disability Strategy Stakeholder Monitoring Group has been established. The group meets twice a year and ensures a continued constructive relationship with stakeholders.

The ‘Victims of Crime Office’ works closely with the Commission for the support of Victims of Crime who have developed an ongoing consultation structure by establishing the Commission’s Consultative Forum representatives of the non-governmental organisations who are engaged in supporting Victims of Crime. The Consultative Forum meets twice a year.

(c) Formal Consultation (Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service/Reception and Integration Agency)

The Department (through INIS) operates a formal consultation process in the area of immigration and related services with non governmental organisations through its Customer Liaison Panel process. The Panel meets three to four times per year and provides a mechanism for its members to address issues of concern and for INIS to appraise them of any developments in the area of asylum or immigration which might impact on the INIS customer base. The membership of the INIS Customer Liaison Panel can be found at Appendix A at back of this Plan.

The Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) engages in consultation on and evaluation of services through formal meetings with NGO's , information clinics; inter agency meetings among State service providers linked with RIA accommodation and other working groups. The RIA is a cross – departmental agency with posts seconded from the Department of Education & Science, the Health Services Executive, Dublin City Council, Irish Prisons Service and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government which enables consultation within the agency to cover a broad range of customer services.

(d) Internet

The Department has continued to develop its two main websites (www.justice.ie) and (www.inis.gov.ie). Visitors can leave any views and comments on the websites and report technical faults relating to the Department's website by clicking on the link to email the 'Pagemaster' on the "Contact us" page pagemaster@justice.ie Technical faults relating

to the INIS website – should be e-mailed to inispagemaster@justice.ie
As stated previously, RIA customers can engage with the Agency through its website www.ria.gov.ie (i.e. Replies are directed to the RIA Customer Liaison Officer for co-ordinated consideration and response.

Visitors to the Department's website, can email any general departmental comments and queries by clicking on the 'Email-us' link on the home page and info@justice.ie link on the 'Contact Us' page. Queries are directed to the Customer Service Officer who is responsible for follow up action. Contact details for individual sections of the Department are also available on the Department's website.

(e) Information

The Department is committed to the provision and dissemination of information on its services and programmes. Published material and information leaflets in this regard will be made available from the Department's Offices while reports, programme documents etc. are already available to purchase from the Government Publications Sales Office. The Department's websites www.justice.ie, www.inis.gov.ie and www.ria.gov.ie already include details of the Department, its role and services, its agencies and full text or extracts from its reports, leaflets and regular publications.

The RIA website is regularly updated with reports, documents and statistics to provide information to a broad range of customers. The RIA submitted its 'Direct Provision Reception & Accommodation Centre Services, Rules and Procedures' document to the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) in order to ensure a plain English version is available to customers. Further steps will continue to be taken to expand the range of

information services including: Continuous review and updating of publications to ensure they are comprehensive, accurate, written in plain language and are available at all points of contact.

The Department provides a range of on-line services including the provision of information to the public via a number of websites, online applications for services and online availability of court documents. For example, the Refugee Appeal Tribunal's website contains a 'Decisions' Archive' which allows registered users to log onto the site to view anonymised previous Decisions of the Tribunal. Access is restricted to appeal applicants' legal representatives'. The IFCO website has a facility which allows business customers to make classification applications online, it provides detailed access to their accounts and also allows them to view a database of historically classified works. The jobs.justice.ie website is used by the Department to manage external competitions which are run under the Department's recruitment license.

8. DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

As befits a customer oriented organisation, the Department will adopt a positive attitude towards all comments/complaints, treating them as an extension to the customer consultation process.

The scope for customer dissatisfaction will be reduced as far as possible by maintaining excellent standards, by well-focused staff training programmes and by openly acknowledging the limitations as well as the benefits of available services. The Department has in place a formal

system to ensure that complaints, including those covered under the Disability Act, 2005, are dealt with in a consistent, open and fair manner.

The Reception and Integration Agency operates by a formal ‘Direct Provision Reception and Accommodation Centre Services, Rules and Procedures’ document which sets out, inter alia, a complaints and appeals procedure for customers. The review group which considered the document, included representatives from RIA, HSE, Office of Attorney General, accommodation centre staff, Non-Governmental Organisations and included consultations with residents at centres. This document is available on the RIA website, www.ria.gov.ie.

(a) [Complaints Procedure](#)

- The main Department has a Customer Service Officer. If a customer has a general complaint or grievance they should e-mail to customerservices@justice.ie. Customers can also write to:

Customer Service Officer,
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
94 St. Stephen’s Green, Dublin 2.

- If a customer has a complaint regarding the quality of customer service provided by INIS they should e-mail to INIScustomercomplaints@justice.ie INIS Customers wishing to make their complaint in writing can write to:

INIS Quality Customer Service Officer,
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
13/14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2.

- When a general complaint is received by the Customer Service Officer, a formal acknowledgement should normally be issued within five working days.
- The Customer Service Officer will ask the Head of the relevant Division to investigate the details of the complaint.
- A reply will normally be sent by the Customer Service Officer or the Head of the relevant Division to the complainant within ten working days, but if there is a need for further investigation, the customer will be informed within 20 working days.
- Where an investigation shows that a complaint has arisen from faulty processes or procedures, this will be remedied as quickly as possible.
- All complaints will be promptly investigated and brought to the attention of senior management.
- All complaints will be logged and analysed by the Customer Service Officer, and the results will be disseminated throughout the organisation.
- If a customer who makes a complaint is not satisfied with the response they receive, they can write to the *Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. Telephone 00353 1 6785222, e-mail *ombudsman@ombudsman.irlgov.ie.

Note: The Ombudsman's Office does not have the power to investigate immigration and naturalisation matters. However, the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) do receive correspondence from that office on such cases and responds to such correspondence giving the factual position on the matter raised.

9. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Department will continue to ensure that Customers and Staff are provided with a healthy and safe environment while on the premises. This is achieved by complying with the Health and Safety legislation and by ensuring that various members of staff in each area are trained to carry out various tasks and functions as set out in the Health and Safety legislation .

APPENDIX A

MEMBERSHIP OF THE INIS CUSTOMER LIAISON PANEL

- . Crosscare Migrant Project,
- . NASC, Immigrant Support Centre, Cork,
- . Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI),
- . Doras Luimni, Limerick,
- . Galway Migrant Service,
- . Migrant Rights Centre Ireland,
- . Refugee Information Service (RIS).

APPENDIX B - IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS FOR OFFICES IN THE MAIN DEPARTMENT

WEBSITE: www.justice.ie Email: info@justice.ie

Head Office,
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
94 St. Stephen's Green,
Dublin 2.
Lo call: 1890 221 227
Ph. (01) 6028202
Fax: (01) 6615461

Other Main Offices:

Pinebrook House
71/74 Harcourt Street,
Dublin 2.
Ph. (01) 6028202
Fax: (01) 6615461

Bishop's Square,
Redmond's Hill,
Dublin 2.
Ph. (01) 4790200
Fax: (01) 4790294

Montague Court,
Montague Street,
Dublin 2.
Ph. (01) 4764975
Fax: (01) 6028614

Office of the Minister for Integration,
Dun Aimhirgin,
43 – 49 Mespil Road,
Dublin 4.
Ph: (01) 6473236
Fax: (01) 6473119
Website: www.integration.ie

Irish Naturalisation & Immigration Service,
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
13/14 Burgh Quay,
Dublin 2.
Ph. (within Ireland): Lo call 1890 551 500
Ph. (from outside Ireland) + 353 1 6167700
Website: www.inis.gov.ie

Financial Shared Services
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
Deerpark Road,
Killarney,
Co. Kerry.
Ph. (064) 34400
Fax. (064) 34433

The Courts Service,
Phoenix Street North,
Smithfield,
Dublin 7.
Ph. (01) 8886000, Website: www.courts.ie

APPENDIX C

THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICES AND AGENCIES

The standards set out in the previous pages apply to all the Department's services and can be expected by all who contact us. Below are a number of Offices and Agencies associated with the Department.

- Office of the Commissioner of An Garda Síochána - HQ (Ph. 01 – 6660000) – Website: www.garda.ie
- An Garda Síochána Inspectorate – (Ph. 01 – 4086500) Website: www.gsinsp.ie
- Anti-Human Trafficking Unit – (Ph. 01- 6028877), e-mail ahtu@justice.ie, , Website: www.blueblindfold.gov.ie
- Censorship of Publications Board (ph. 01 – 7996100)
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal (Ph. 01 – 6610604)
- Courts Service (Ph. 01 – 8886000) Website: www.courts.ie
- Coroners Service Implementation Office (Ph. 046-9091323)
- Cosc, The National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (Ph: 01- 4768680) Website: www.cosc.ie
- Equality Authority (Ph: 01- 4173333, Lo call 1890 245 545) Website: www.equality.ie)
- Equality Tribunal (Ph: 01 – 4774100, Lo call 1890 34 44 24) Website: www.equalitytribunal.ie
- Forensic Science Laboratory (Ph. 01 – 6662910) Website: www.forensicscience.ie

- Garda Ombudsman Commission (Ph. 01 - 8716727, Lo call 1890 600 800) Fax: 01 - 8147023, Email - info@gsoc.ie
[Website: www.gardaombudsman.ie](http://www.gardaombudsman.ie)
- Irish Human Rights Commission (Ph 01 - 8589601) Fax: 01 - 8589609, Email - info@ihrc.ie, [Website: www.ihrc.ie](http://www.ihrc.ie)
- Irish Prison Service (Ph. 043 – 35100) [Website: www.irishprisons.ie](http://www.irishprisons.ie)
- Irish Film Classification Office - (Ph. 01 – 7996100)
[Website: www.ifco.ie](http://www.ifco.ie)
- Legal Aid Board (Ph. 066- 9471000/01-6441900)
[Website: www.legalaidboard.ie](http://www.legalaidboard.ie)
- National Disability Authority (Ph. 01-6080400) [Website: www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie)
- National Property Services Regulatory Authority (Ph. 046-9033800) [Website: www.NPSRA.ie](http://www.NPSRA.ie)
- Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (Ph. 057 – 8684800, Lo call 1890 252 231) [Website: - www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie)
- Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) (Ph. 01 – 6028000, Lo call 1890 202 418) – [Website: www.orac.ie](http://www.orac.ie)
- Office of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (ORAT) (Ph. 01- 4748400, Lo call 1890 210 458). [Website: www.refappeal.ie](http://www.refappeal.ie)
- Office of Internet Safety – (Ph. 01-4086122) –
[Website: www.internetsafety.ie](http://www.internetsafety.ie)
- Private Security Authority (Ph. 062 – 31588/9) [Website: www.psa.gov.ie](http://www.psa.gov.ie)
- Probation Service (Ph. 01 – 8173600) [Website: www.probation.ie](http://www.probation.ie)

- Property Registration Authority (Ph. 01 – 6707500, Lo call 1890 333 001, 1890 333 002 and Helpdesk 1890 333 003) [Website: www.prai.ie](http://www.prai.ie)
- Refugee and Integration Agency (Ph 01 - 6473236)
[Website: www.integration.ie](http://www.integration.ie)
- State Pathology Service (Ph. 01 – 8534872)
- Victims of Crime Office (Ph. 01 – 6028661)

Note : A full listing of relevant telephone numbers, including individual Garda Stations, Court Offices, Prisons and Places of Detention, is in the current telephone directory.

[Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform](http://www.justice.ie)

This plan is available for download at [www.justice.ie – publications](http://www.justice.ie).
Also, if customers require a hard copy of this report they should contact the Department's Head Office, Corporate Services Division, 71-74 Harcourt St. Dublin 2.

