



Social Security Agency


Customer Charter



An Agency within the Department for

**Social
Development**

www.dsdni.gov.uk



“...helping people
change their lives
for the better...”

We assess and pay social security benefits, as well as giving advice and information about these benefits.

We promise to

TREAT YOU FAIRLY AND HONESTLY

We will listen to you, be open and treat you with respect. We will protect your personal information and investigate all reports of fraud to protect public money.

KEEP YOU INFORMED

We have 35 public offices across Northern Ireland where you can get advice and information on social security benefits.

We have up to date information on nidirect (www.nidirect.gov.uk) about social security benefits, changes to the welfare system, how we work and how to contact us.



GIVE YOU A QUALITY SERVICE

You can apply to the Agency to claim social security benefits. When we receive your claim we will check that you are entitled to the benefit and once we have all the necessary documentation we will assess your claim.

We will always explain our decisions so you can be confident in our decision making. However, if the outcome is not what you hoped for you can ask us to reconsider. The letter we send you about the decision will also have information on how and when you can ask for the decision to be reconsidered.

We act professionally and we always aim to get it right first time. We monitor our performance and use your feedback to continuously improve our services. We publish information on our performance in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts which you can view on the Department for Social Development's website, www.dsdni.gov.uk.

In order for us to deliver on our promises we need you to:

- give us the correct information at the right time
- tell us when your circumstances change
- be on time for any appointments
- treat our staff with respect.

Contacting Us



BY TELEPHONE

The most convenient way to contact us is by telephone. Our telephone numbers are listed at the back of this document.

Our lines are open between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. We aim to answer telephone calls within 20 seconds. If we can't deal with your enquiry immediately, we will call you back later that day and if your query is taking longer to deal with we will let you know when you can expect a response.

OUR PUBLIC OFFICES

Should you want to see us, our public offices are open Monday to Friday, from 9am to 4.30pm, except Thursdays when we open at 9.30am to facilitate staff training.

We are closed public and most bank holidays.

When you arrive at one of our offices, we will ask you how we can help and provide you with assistance. It may be more convenient for you to make an appointment than to call in. If you are not able to call in to one of our offices, in exceptional circumstances we may be able to visit you at your home.

IN WRITING

If you contact us by email we will let you know the name of the person handling your case within a day and we will respond to your query within 10 working days.

If you write to us we will let you know we have received your letter and reply to your query within 10 working days. If we can't deal with your query within 10 working days we will contact you, explain why and let you know when you can expect our response.

If Things Go Wrong

If you have a complaint about something that has gone wrong, we want to know so that we can try to put it right.

Our complaints procedure is simple and convenient.

If you wish to make a complaint you should contact the office dealing with your benefit claim. If you prefer, you can ask to be referred to a member of the management team in that office.

You can make a complaint in the way that best suits you, including:

- by telephone
- by email
- in writing
- in person (at one of our offices).

If you make a complaint, we will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within two working days and aim to respond within 10 working days.

We will follow up on all our customer complaints and if we have made a mistake, we will apologise and learn from it as we continually improve our service.



Your Feedback

We welcome your views about our services and encourage you to share these with us.

YOU CAN WRITE TO US AT:

Social Security Agency
Customer Service Unit
Lighthouse Building
Gasworks Business Park
Belfast, BT7 2PL

OR YOU CAN EMAIL US AT:

customerservice.unit@dsdni.gov.uk

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Jobseeker's Allowance	0800 022 4250
Income Support	0800 022 4250
Social Fund	0800 022 4250
Crisis Loan	0800 028 8822
Employment and Support Allowance - New Claims	0800 085 6318
Employment and Support Allowance - Enquiries	0300 123 3012 0845 602 7301
Disability Living Allowance	028 9090 6182
Attendance Allowance	028 9090 6178
Carer's Allowance / Carer's Credit	028 9090 6186
State Pension - New Claims	0808 100 2658
State Pension - Enquiries	0300 123 3014 0845 601 8821
Pension Credit - New Applications	0808 100 6165
Pension Credit - Enquiries	0300 123 3014 0845 601 8821
Bereavement Service	0800 085 2463
Debt Management	0300 123 1030
Fraud Hotline	0800 975 6050
Benefit Advice Line	0800 232 1271