

DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY

THE INSOLVENCY SERVICE CHARTER

SERVICE FIRST

THE NEW CHARTER PROGRAMME

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FOREWORD

This charter sets out the standards of service you can expect from the staff who work in the Insolvency Service. It reflects our commitment to deliver a high standard of service to all our users. It also gives details about what you can do should you feel that these standards have not been met.

We aim to provide a high quality service to everyone that is financially affected by a bankruptcy or the failure of a company wound up by the High Court. To assist in achieving this, we employ specialist staff with professional training in insolvency law and accountancy who are supported by experienced and knowledgeable administrative staff. We are committed to implementing the principles on which, Service First, the new Charter programme for Northern Ireland is based .

We have a record of impartiality and integrity, of which all our staff are proud, and are dedicated to maintaining. I am equally confident that we will continue to deliver a high standard of service to all our customers in the future.

Richard Monds
Director of Insolvency
July 2016

1. WHAT WE DO

The Insolvency Service manages and investigates the affairs of bankrupts and companies in liquidation, establishes the reasons for insolvency and reports on misconduct.

What is insolvency?

The most commonly used definition of insolvency is the inability of an individual or company to pay debts when they become due. The Official Receiver is appointed by the High Court, following the making of a Bankruptcy or a winding-up order, to handle the early stages of a bankruptcy or compulsory liquidation.

A bankruptcy order is an order made by the High Court against an individual who is unable to pay their debts.

A winding-up order is an order made by the High Court against a company or partnership which cannot pay its debts.

The Official Receiver's role

The Official Receiver is a civil servant and an officer of the High Court.

He, and his staff, manage the affairs of bankrupts and companies in compulsory liquidation, investigate the affairs of individuals in bankruptcy and companies in compulsory liquidation.

As a result of those investigations, any evidence of criminal offences will be reported to the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Similarly, if any unfit conduct by directors of companies in compulsory liquidation are identified, a report will be submitted to the Department for the Economy which will decide whether to commence court proceedings to disqualify a director.

2. WHERE WE ARE

Our office is located in Fermanagh House, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast and is open to the public between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Our telephone number is (028) 9025 1441.

Visitors to Fermanagh House will find commercial car parking facilities available at conveniently placed car parks or on-street parking during the day.

3. CONTACT WITH OUR STAFF

Our staff will:

- be efficient, courteous and helpful at all times;
- wear identification badges when dealing with you in the office;
- give their name when answering the phone and in correspondence;
- treat all customers consistently and impartially; and
- treat all personal information confidentially and use it only as allowed by law.

4. OUR STANDARDS OF SERVICE

We will provide the following standards of service:

Calling at Our Office

We will:

- be open to the public between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm on Monday to Friday (except for Public and Bank Holidays);
- attend to you within 9 minutes of arrival when you call at our office for an appointment;
- try to see you where possible if you call without an appointment (however, it is advisable to make an appointment with the person dealing with your case);

and

- conduct all interviews in private.

Our building is accessible to, and has toilet facilities suitable for, people with disabilities.

Enquiries

- We will give a full reply to written enquiries within 11 working days. If it is not possible to give a full reply within this timescale we will let you know why within 5 working days and tell you when you can expect a full response.
- We aim to answer telephone calls, at our switchboard, within 9 seconds. If the first person you speak to cannot deal with your enquiry in full, you will be passed to someone who can. If necessary we will call you back within 24 hours.

Monitoring

- We monitor our performance against the standards and publish the results in the Insolvency Service Annual Report. Copies of the report can be purchased by contacting The Stationery Office, 19a Weavers Court Business Park, Linfield Road, Belfast, BT12 5GH.
- Our standards of service are reviewed regularly and our latest standards and performance will be displayed in our reception area and published in the Insolvency Service Annual Report.

5. HOW YOU CAN HELP US

You can help us by:

- quoting relevant references, as set out in any correspondence sent to you from the office, when telephoning us;
- providing a full and frank disclosure of all relevant information; and
- replying quickly to our correspondence or requests for further information.

6. IF THINGS GO WRONG

Whilst it is our aim to give the best possible service, problems occasionally occur. If you are not satisfied with our service, or if you have encountered any other problem, please let us know so that immediate steps can be taken to put matters right. We can guarantee that there will be a full and fair investigation of your complaint and you will be told what is happening. If a mistake has been made, we will apologise and try to put it right immediately. You can make your complaint either by phone, or by writing to the office.

In most cases it will be possible to sort problems out informally and quickly by contacting the person you have been dealing with or his, or her, immediate supervisor. This is usually the best way to resolve problems or minor differences of opinion which have arisen. However, if you are not satisfied with the answer you receive or if you feel that insufficient action is taken to deal with the problem you can, if you wish, make a formal complaint in writing. You should contact the Customer Relations Officer at:

Customer Relations Officer
The Insolvency Service
Fermanagh House
Ormeau Avenue
Belfast
BT2 8NJ

The Customer Relations Officer will investigate your complaint and will give you a full reply within 10 working days; if that is not possible he or she will issue a letter to you explaining why and stating when you will receive a full reply.

If you are not satisfied with the response of the Customer Relations Officer, you should write to the Director of the Insolvency Service:

Mr Richard Monds
The Insolvency Service
Fermanagh House
20A Ormeau Avenue
Belfast

BT2 8NJ

He will call for a full report on your complaint to make sure that you were dealt with according to our standards of service. He will give a full reply to your complaint within 10 working days; if that is not possible, he will issue a letter to you explaining why and stating when you will receive a full reply.

In all cases your complaint will be:

- acknowledged within 2 working days;
- investigated thoroughly; and
- treated confidentially.

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

If you remain dissatisfied you can refer your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman, this should be done within 6 months.

The Ombudsman will normally expect you to have used our complaints procedure before considering your complaint. The Ombudsman can only enquire into the administrative functions undertaken by our staff in their dealings with you; he cannot investigate how a decision was made in a bankruptcy or liquidation as this would be a matter to be determined by the High Court.

You may contact the Ombudsman at:

Free post NIPSO or

The Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman
Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast
BT1 6HN

Fax: (028) 90233821

Phone: 0800 343424. This call is free.

E-mail: nipso@ni-ombudsman.org.uk

or by calling between 9.00 am & 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday, at the above address.

General Control by the Court

If you are a bankrupt, company director, creditor or if you have been affected by a decision made by the Official Receiver in relation to a bankruptcy or compulsory liquidation, you may apply to the High Court for a review of this decision.

Applications should be addressed to:

The Master (Bankruptcy)

Royal Courts of Justice

Chichester Street

Belfast

BT1 3JF.

7. IMPROVING OUR SERVICE

We welcome your suggestions on how the service we provide might be improved. If you have any comments or ideas for improvements, you should write to the Director of Insolvency at the address on the previous page.

An Insolvency Service User Group will meet at least once a year to consider improvements that can be made to our service and to provide feedback on performance from our customers.

8. HOW TO CONTACT US

Our address is: Fermanagh House
20A Ormeau Avenue
Belfast
BT2 8NJ

Our telephone number is: (028) 9025 1441.

Our fax number is: (028) 9054 8555.

You can also contact us by e-mail on: insolvency@economy-ni.gov.uk