

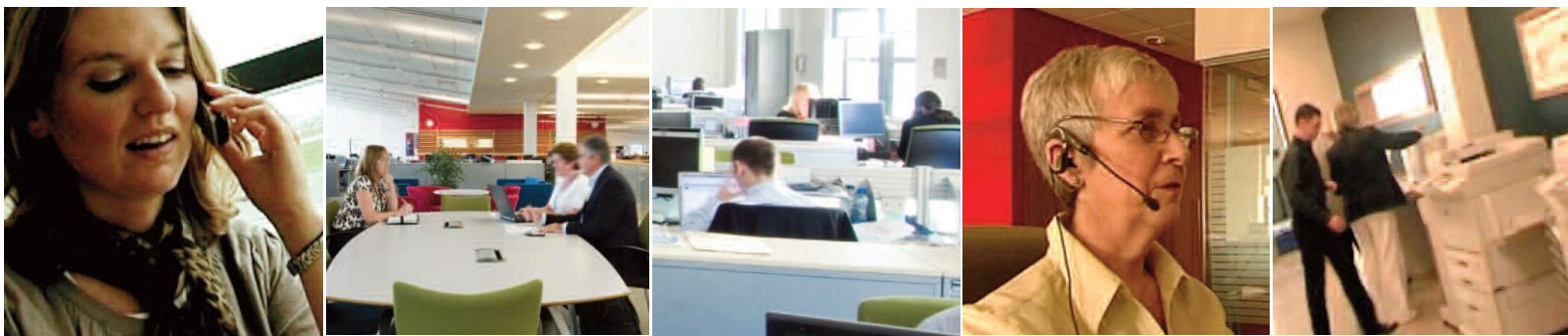


Department of
Finance

www.finance-ni.gov.uk

customer service standards

the standard of service you can expect
from the Department of Finance



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customer service standards

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Introduction

The Department of Finance (DoF) is committed to providing a high standard of service at all times.

This leaflet sets out the standards of service you can expect from us. If we do not meet these standards, please let us know. Your feedback is very important to us and helps us improve the standard of our services.

We will:

- publish a set of nine customer service standards including the complaints procedure for the Department;
- provide you with clear information about our services and contact addresses and telephone numbers;
- take all reasonable steps to make services accessible to everyone, including people with special needs;
- consult you regularly about services and report on findings;
- ensure that staff are polite and helpful at all times;
- aim to see callers at appointed time;
- aim to answer your telephone calls as promptly as possible and tell you the name and business area of the person to whom you are speaking; and
- answer your letters, faxes and emails clearly within 10 working days (for general correspondence), 20 working days (for Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations requests), and 40 calendar days (for Data Protection Act requests).

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Standards

Standard 1 – Publishing service standards

- Copies of the Department's customer service standards will be made available on the DoF internet (www.finance-ni.gov.uk/) or posted out on request.
- The Department's Directorates/Agency may produce their own more detailed customer service standards which will be made available to all their internal and external customer groups.

Standard 2 – Informing the customer

- Information about the services provided by each of the Directorates/Agency, including contact details, will be placed on the DoF internet site and updated as necessary.
- Contact names and numbers will be included in the documented service standards for the Directorate/Agency.

Standard 3 – Service accessibility

- Where documents do not meet the needs of the customer, alternative arrangements for communication of the information may be considered where it is practical and appropriate to do so.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to DoF accommodation to ensure, where practicable, that they are accessible to customers.
- Where this is not possible, every attempt will be made to provide alternative access arrangements for customers.

Standard 4 – Consulting with customers

- The customers of all Directorates/Agency will be surveyed on a regular basis.
- Customer satisfaction survey results will be published.

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Standards (cont'd)

Standard 5 – Polite and helpful staff

- Staff will always act in a professional, polite and helpful manner.

Standard 6 – Seeing callers

- Reception areas will be notified of expected visitors in advance.
- Expected visitors will be seen within 10 minutes of their appointment.
- When we have an appointment with you, we will aim to see you at the appointed time. If we are delayed more than 10 minutes, we will make every effort to advise you of this and, if necessary, arrange a new appointment.

Standard 7 – Answering telephone calls

- Staff will give their name and division or business unit when answering telephone calls.
- Phones will be answered as promptly as possible.
- Unanswered telephones will automatically divert to voicemail or an alternative extension after 6 rings.

Standard 8 – Answering letters, faxes and emails

- All our emails will include our contact details.
- “Out of office emails” will be used during periods of absence and will provide alternative contact details.
- Where substantive responses to correspondence are unlikely to be provided promptly, i.e. within 10 working days, a holding response, acknowledging receipt of the correspondence will be issued within 3 working days.
- Official letter headed paper will be used where appropriate.

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Standards (cont'd)

Standard 9 – Having a complaints procedure

The Department of Finance and its Directorates/Agency take all complaints about the quality of its services seriously. We will provide a speedy response and a full and fair investigation of your complaint.

Initially you should take up your complaint directly and informally with the person with whom you have been in contact. You can express your dissatisfaction by letter, fax, email or telephone. You can expect a reply from us within 10 working days.

DoF and its Directorates/Agency have the following 2-stage formal complaints process:

Stage 1: If you are not satisfied with the initial response, you should write to the line manager of the person you have been dealing with setting out your complaint clearly and in detail. Our target for replying to formal complaints is 10 working days from the date of receipt. If a full reply cannot be issued within this time (e.g. if further information is required), an interim reply should be issued which will include an indication as to when a final reply can be expected.

Stage 2: If you are still not satisfied with our explanation, you can write to the Director of the appropriate business area or the Chief Executive of the Agency. You will receive a full response within a further 15 working days.

If you continue to be dissatisfied, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) within six months of the completion of DoF's internal complaints procedure. However, the NIPSO may investigate a complaint outside the time limit if there are special circumstances that would make it proper to do so.

Contact details for the NIPSO are provided at the end of this document.

Please note that this procedure relates to complaints about the service we provide and not about Government policy, the content of legislation or contractual issues. However when your complaint does not involve the Department of Finance, or is a matter outside our control, we will do our best to advise you how to pursue it.

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Standards (cont'd)

Helping us to improve our service

We aim to improve our service by:

- Listening to your views and ideas;
- Taking full account of your complaints;
- Undertaking customer surveys;
- Reviewing and evaluating our performance periodically and publishing the results; and
- Maintaining a Complaints Register for each Directorate/Agency.

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Contacting DoF

DoF has numerous offices throughout Northern Ireland and the main Directorates/Agency can be contacted as follows:

Central Procurement Directorate

Level 2
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Belfast BT3 9ED

Tel: 028 9081 6200
Email: procure.info@finance-ni.gov.uk

Corporate Human Resources

7th Floor
Royston House
34 Upper Queen Street
Belfast BT1 6FD

Tel: 028 9054 2070
Network Extension: 42070

Corporate Services Group – Central Services Division

Balloo Annexe
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor BT19 7PR

Tel: 028 9185 8265
Network Extension: 68265

Corporate Services Group – Finance Division

4th Floor
Goodwood House
44-58 May Street
Belfast BT1 4NN

Tel: 028 9025 4707
Network Extension: 54707

Departmental Solicitor's Office

Victoria Hall
12 May Street
Belfast BT1 4NL

Tel: 028 9025 1246
Network Extension: 51246

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Contacting DoF

Enterprise Shared Services

Business Support Division
Craigantlet Buildings
Stoney Road
Belfast BT4 3SX

Tel: 028 9016 3062
Network Extension: 73062

Land & Property Services

Corporate Correspondence
and Complaints Unit
Lanyon Plaza
7 Lanyon Place
Belfast BT1 3LP

Tel: 0300 200 7805
Email: customerservices@lpsni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency

Corporate Services
McAuley House
2-14 Castle Street
Belfast BT1 1SA

Tel: 028 9034 8100
Network Extension: 67100

Public Spending Directorate

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor BT19 7PR

Tel: 028 9185 8187
Network Extension: 68187

Strategic Policy and Reform Directorate

Carleton House
1 Cromac Avenue
Gasworks Business Park
Belfast BT7 2JA

Tel: 028 9090 9304 / 9090 9310
Network Extension: 81304 / 81310

Or you can contact our switch board (8.30am - 5.30pm) Monday-Friday on 028 91 858111 and they will direct you to the appropriate Directorate/Agency.

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Contacting the NIPSO

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman

Progressive House
33 Wellington Place
Belfast BT1 6HN

Opening Hours: 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday (excluding Public Holidays)

Telephone: 028 9023 3821
Text Phone: 028 9089 7789
Freephone: 0800 34 34 24
Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk
Freepost: Freepost NIPSO

Website: www.nipso.org.uk