

# Customer Charter

# Foreword

Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) is the main economic development organisation for Northern Ireland. Our aim is to grow the Northern Ireland economy by helping businesses to grow and compete internationally and by attracting new investment into Northern Ireland. We principally support businesses in the manufacturing and tradable services sectors.

Invest NI offers the Northern Ireland business community a single organisation, providing high-quality services and expert advice. We support businesses throughout their lifecycle and across the full spectrum of their activity including research and development, people management, strategic development, e-business, environmental impact and export development.

We operate under an independent Board whose Chairman is responsible to the Northern Ireland Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment. I, as Chief Executive, am responsible to the Board for the management of Invest NI on a day-to-day basis.

We believe that our wide experience of working with many hundreds of businesses at all stages of development can be of value to you and that the support you receive should be as simple as possible and relevant to your needs.

This Charter is more than just a document - it is a guide for Invest NI customers on our standards and on the delivery of our products and services.

It also indicates what to do if you feel that we have failed to provide a satisfactory service and explains how we will deal with your concerns.

However, the professionalism and integrity of all Invest NI staff in their interactions with our customers will determine whether or not the overall Charter will succeed.



Alastair Hamilton  
Chief Executive



# What is the Customer Charter?

This Charter is essentially about Invest NI's relationship with our customers. It is about ensuring that:

- we create and maintain a customer focus.
- effective communication exists between Invest NI staff and all our customers.
- we maintain a level of service above certain pre-set limits.
- Invest NI's product range and service delivery are appropriate for customers' needs.

It therefore defines an ongoing process whereby individual contact between Invest NI staff and customers contributes to an increasing awareness of Invest NI's professionalism and continually improves our customer service. The Charter sets out:

- What we will do for you;
- How we propose to do it; and
- In what timescale.

It also outlines what we, in turn, expect from our customers to enable us to meet our commitments to you.

Thus, this Charter acts as a 'letter of engagement' and is a statement of what we consider to be best practice.

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# What will we do?

## Invest NI will:

- treat our customers fairly.
- quickly identify your needs and let you know how we may be able to help. This may mean that we have to make judgements about any proposals that you present.\*
- explain the information we require, how we work (our processes), giving indications of how long each stage may take and what form of support you could receive. Where we are unable to provide any support, we will inform you as quickly as possible and let you know the reasons why.
- keep in touch and let you know as quickly as possible if extra information is required or if there will be any delays.
- explain carefully the details of any support that we provide to ensure that you understand any conditions or undertakings for which you will be responsible.
- always work in a professional manner, providing advice or information that is focused on your best interests but which will also protect public funds.
- always ensure that our dealings with you are courteous and confidential and that we will do our best to meet any commitments that we have made to you.

\*subject to prevailing policy and resources

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# What we expect you to do

**We expect you to:**

- provide any information that has been requested within agreed timescales.
  - let us know if you are unable to do this or if your circumstances or plans change.
  - understand that, where you are offered financial support from the public purse, there will be obligations and conditions that you will need to fulfil.
  - ensure that your business meets the targets that have been mutually agreed.
  - treat our staff with respect.
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# Key Elements of our Service

The Charter covers four main areas:

## Customer Focus

## Communication

## Handling Expectations

## Products/services

### Customer Focus

In delivering our products and services we will ensure customer focus by:

- Seeking feedback on our Business Services
- providing customer service training for staff
- maintaining a professional approach
- being empathetic
- being friendly and polite
- being reliable
- maintaining confidentiality
- participating in internal and independent evaluations to assess the impact of our activities on customers
- maintaining adequate office cover
- responding to customers promptly and within agreed timescales.

### Communication

All our communications will be open, clear and two-way.

Our customers will be issued with clear guidelines regarding the proposed timescale in relation to any specific project and will be given adequate information on Invest NI's procedures. We will also ensure that you are kept informed regarding your project's progress.

We will ensure that our customer-facing staff are equipped with the necessary sectoral/business knowledge and skills to evaluate proposals and provide advice about what Invest NI can offer.

We will use plain English in our offers of assistance and, where jargon is unavoidable, it will be fully explained. Any conditions that are included in offers of assistance and post approval monitoring will also be explained.



### Handling Expectations

We will ensure that there is a clear understanding of what each party is proposing to do and the procedures involved.

Your queries will be filtered carefully to ensure that they are directed to the appropriate Invest NI member of staff. Enquiries and queries will be dealt with as quickly as possible and, should there be a delay in answering them, the reasons for this will be clearly communicated.

During any negotiations on offers of assistance you will be made aware of procedures and timescales and agreement will be sought regarding the supply of information for the purposes of appraisal. Should information not be provided by the set date, the implications of the delay will be discussed with you.

You will be regularly updated on the progress of your case and, should there need to be a change of executive, this will be clearly communicated, along with the reason for this. A handover meeting will also be held to ensure that the new executive is fully briefed on the case.

### Products & Services

We will seek to ensure that Invest NI's products and services are appropriate to meet your needs by:

- being innovative in new product development
- continually seeking the views of customers and Invest NI staff.

We will carefully communicate Invest NI's relevant products and services and programmes and provide business solutions tailored to your needs.

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# Processes and Service Standards

## Web / Social media

Through our various web and social media interfaces together with customers meetings, telephone, letter/fax/email - we will seek opportunities to manage our professional relationship and increase our understanding of your needs. This will be facilitated by defined service standards.

## Project Support

There will be an initial assessment of any project and the process will be fully explained to you. If we are taking your proposal forward for support, we may have to request additional information. We will agree timescales for the provision of such information and provide an indication of when we are likely to respond. Should we decide not to support your project we will explain the reasons for this carefully to you and, if necessary, confirm this in writing. For all substantive processes we will give you an indication of the likely timescales and key milestones. Substantive processes include all our customer-related interactions covering assessments, negotiation, offer preparation and claims processing.

# Invest NI Standards of Service

We recognise that excellent customer service is integral to the delivery of high quality public services and we are committed to meeting the needs of customers in a professional manner.

You can expect the following standards when you contact us:

## Staff:

1. We will treat our customers FAIRLY.
2. Our Staff will be POLITE and FRIENDLY.
3. Our Staff will act with PROFESSIONALISM and INTEGRITY.

## Calling in Person:

4. If you have an appointment we aim to meet you within 5 minutes of your appointment time.

5. If you call in person and do not have an appointment a member of staff will meet you within 15 minutes.

## Invoice Payment:

6. We aim to pay 90% of agreed and valid supplier invoices within 10 days of receipt.

## By Telephone:

7. We aim to answer calls to our main enquiry contact numbers within office opening hours within 10 secs.
8. Our staff voicemails will meet our Contactability Policy standard. Voicemails confirm that, if a staff member is in the office, you can expect your call returned within 4 working hours or:
9. It will include the contact details for an alternative contact.

## In Writing or By Email:

10. We will acknowledge 90% of business related external correspondence to our main enquiry handling team within 2 working days.
11. We will provide a response to all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within 20 working days.

## Feedback and Complaints

12. We will respond to formal complaints in 10 working days.
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# Feedback and Complaints

We are always keen to hear about ways in which we can improve the quality of our services so welcome any comments or suggestions that you might have. Compliments or criticisms are equally welcome and you do not have to provide your name if you do not wish to do so.

While our aim is to provide a high quality service we recognise there may be occasions when problems arise and you do not receive the service you expect. In most cases an issue can be resolved by contacting the person with whom you have been dealing, but if you would rather not do this we have developed a mechanism to ensure you can pass on your concerns. More information, and a feedback form, can be found in our Complaints and Feedback Procedure.

If you do have feedback that you would like us to consider please get in touch using the contact details below:

Address: Complaints & Feedback  
Bedford Square  
Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7ES

E-mail: [complaints.feedback@investni.com](mailto:complaints.feedback@investni.com)

Website: [investni.com/contactus](http://investni.com/contactus)

# What is a complaint?

A complaint could be about any aspect of our services, for instance:

- When we do not deliver a service on time.
- When we give you the wrong information.
- When you receive a poor quality service.
- When you have a problem with the service provided by a member of staff.

The following issues will not be dealt with under our complaints procedure:

- Appeals of business decisions.
- Appeals to a tribunal.
- An information request.
- A request for service.

Such requests will be dealt with as normal business issues and you should contact the relevant department.

# How to make a complaint?

We are keen to ensure that all complaints about our services are dealt with in a satisfactory way and are resolved as quickly as possible.

Often an issue can be resolved easily by contacting the person with whom you have been dealing with. You can do this in person, by telephone, email or letter.

Alternatively, if you would rather not deal with the member of staff responsible or are not sure who is responsible for the service you wish to complain about you can raise a formal complaint with the Invest NI Complaints Manager. You can do this in three ways:

- Submit your complaint through our **online form**.
- Email us at [complaints.feedback@investni.com](mailto:complaints.feedback@investni.com).
- Submit your complaint in writing, including your full name and address, as much as you can about the complaint and what has gone wrong, to Invest NI Complaints Manager, Bedford Square, Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7ES.

We will acknowledge receipt of all feedback within one working day. We will respond to formal complaints in 10 working days. To help us deal effectively with your concerns please tell us:

1. What the issue is
2. When it happened
3. Who you dealt with

# Equality Commitment

Invest NI is working towards creating a successful economy in Northern Ireland that will provide equal opportunities for all citizens. We are fully committed to equality of opportunity across all areas of the organisation.

We comply with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which requires us to perform our functions in accordance with the principles of equality of opportunity between.

- Men and women generally.
- Persons with a disability and persons without.
- Persons with dependants and persons without.
- Persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation.



## Invest NI Values

Invest NI's set of values is illustrated below:

- Customer Focus:** We are highly responsive and proactive, creating value adding relationships. We will deliver on the identified needs of our customers.
- Respect:** We show mutual regard for all others, value diversity and are committed to the organisation.
- Integrity:** We take responsibility for all our actions, in particular the management of risk, and are vigilant in managing public money. We are honest and fair with each other and our customers (stakeholders).
- One Team:** We are one team working to achieve shared goals.
- Passion:** We believe in and are enthusiastic about what we do. We have a desire to succeed, to continually innovate and look for ways to do things better.
- Professional:** We are clear, concise and straightforward. We continually develop and apply our skills and knowledge to provide a high quality service.
- Performance:** We strive to achieve our goals in line with Invest NI's strategy, policy and procedures.
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## Regional Office Network

### HEAD OFFICE

Bedford Square  
Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7ES

E: info@investni.com  
T: 028 9069 8000  
F: 028 9043 6536  
Textphone : 028 9069 8085

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100-114 Strand Road  
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E : nwo@investni.com  
T : 028 7126 7257  
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### SOUTHERN

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The Quays  
Newry  
BT35 8QF

E : so@investni.com  
T : 028 3026 2955  
F : 028 3026 5358

### WESTERN

Kevin Buildings  
47 Kevin Avenue  
Omagh  
BT78 1ER

E : wo@investni.com  
T : 028 8224 5763  
F : 028 9043 6536

### NORTH EAST

Thomas House  
32E Thomas Street  
Ballymena BT43 6AX

E : neo@investni.com  
T : 028 2564 9215  
F : 028 9043 6536

### ORACLE CONFERENCE CENTRE

Southern Regional College  
36 Lurgan Road  
Portadown BT63 5BL

E : so@investni.com  
T : 028 3839 0140  
F : 028 9043 6536

### INTEC CENTRE

36 East Bridge Street  
Enniskillen  
BT74 7BT

E : wo@investni.com  
T : 028 6634 3942  
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### EASTERN

Bedford Square  
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# The Overseas Office Network

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**T:** 00 322 290 1344

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### Düsseldorf

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Medienzentrum  
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SW1P 3AY  
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### San Francisco

44 Montgomery Street  
Suite 3050  
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CA 94104  
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**T:** 00 1 415 854 0644

**F:** 00 1 415 854 0763

## INDIA, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

### Bangalore

British Deputy High  
Commission  
Prestige Takt  
23 Kasturba Road Cross  
Bangalore - 560001

**T:** 00 91 804 149 2481

### Dubai

Office 117  
IBM Building  
Dubai Internet City  
PO Box 9284  
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**T:** 00 9714 3914700

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### Erbil

British Consulate General  
Khanzad Hotel  
Shaqlawa Main road  
Erbil, Kurdistan

**T:** 00 964 770 670 1111

### Jeddah

British Consulate General  
PO Box 393  
Jeddah 21411  
Saudi Arabia

**T:** 00 9662 6225550

Ext 2216

**F:** 00 9662 6226176

### Mumbai

British Deputy High  
Commission  
Naman Chambers  
C-32, G-Block  
Bandra Kurla Complex  
Bandra East  
Mumbai 400 051

**T:** 00 91 22 6650 2250

## ASIA PACIFIC

### Beijing

The British Centre  
Room 1001  
China Life Tower  
16 Chaoyangmenwai Ave.  
Beijing 100020

**T:** 00 86 10 8525 1111

### Shanghai

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If you require this brochure in an alternative format (including Braille, disk, audio cassette or in minority languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English) then please contact:

**Invest NI Equality Team**

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**Email:** [equality@investni.com](mailto:equality@investni.com)

**Text Relay Number:** 18001 028 9069 8273



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[investni.com](http://investni.com)

[nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://nibusinessinfo.co.uk)