



Department of
**Agriculture,
Food and the Marine**

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara**

Customer Service Complaints Procedure

Note

This Customer Service Complaints Procedure concerns complaints regarding customer service. It does not cover appeals against actual decisions taken in the operation of a scheme or service. Appeals concerning entitlement to any of the payments related to the schemes listed in the schedule to the Agriculture Appeals Act, 2001 as amended are dealt with by the Agriculture Appeals Office. The Agriculture Appeals Office is an independent agency established in 2002 to provide an appeals service to farmers who are dissatisfied with decisions of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine concerning designated Schemes operated by the Department. It can be contacted at:

*Agriculture Appeals Office
Kilminchy Court
Portlaoise
Co. Laois*

Lo-Call no: 076 1064418

Tel no: (057) 8631900

Fax no: (057) 8667177

E-mail: appeals@agriappeals.gov.ie

Web: www.agriappeals.gov.ie

Delivering Quality Customer Service

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is committed to providing a user-friendly, high quality service to all our customers and clients. Information on standards of service aimed for by the Department is outlined in the following documents:

- [Farmers' Charter of Rights 2015-2020](#) and
- [Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan 2015 -2020](#)

The Department's Commitment to Complainants

- We will acknowledge customer service complaints and provide a substantive response, insofar as possible, within the prescribed timelines which are as follows:
 - Complaints will be logged on receipt and acknowledged within 3 working days.
 - A substantive response will be issued insofar as possible within 20 working days.
- Where it is not possible to provide a substantive response within the prescribed timeline, you will be kept informed of progress and advised of any additional time required and the reasons for any delay.
- We will judge all complaints on their merits and facts.
- We will manage complaints in a way that is fair, non-recriminatory, respectful and impartial.
- If we make a mistake or fail to deliver a quality service we will apologise and try to rectify the situation without delay.
- We will learn from complaints and take appropriate remedial action where required.

Our Customer Service Complaints Procedure

There are three steps in the customer service complaints process:

1. Complaints should first be directed to the senior officer in charge of the business area within the Department to which the complaint pertains. Complaints received by the Quality Service Unit which have not been responded to by the Head of the relevant business area will be forwarded to that senior officer for direct reply.
2. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response received from the Head of the relevant business area, the complaint can be sent to the Quality Service Unit who will examine any **customer service aspect** of the complaint. The Quality Service Unit will have the matter fully and impartially investigated by an officer who was not involved in the matter giving rise to the complaint.

(Appeals against actual decisions taken in the operation of a scheme or service are dealt with, in the first instance, by a more senior officer in the Division where the original decision was taken and, if the complainant remains dissatisfied, may be subsequently referred by the complainant to the Agriculture Appeals Office).

The Quality Service Unit can be contacted at:

Quality Service Unit
Corporate Affairs Division
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Grattan House
Grattan Business Park
Dublin Road
Portlaoise
Co. Laois
Telephone: 057 8694331

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E-mail: QualityServiceUnit@agriculture.gov.ie

3. If the complainant remains dissatisfied after steps 1 and 2 above, it is open to the complainant to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. The Office of the Ombudsman examines complaints from people who feel they have been unfairly treated by certain public bodies, for example, government departments. They can be contacted at:

Address: 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2, D02 HE97.

Phone: +353-1-639 5600

Lo-call: 1890 223030

Fax: +353-1-639 5674

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

Complaints should be made in writing by letter or by email. In cases where this is not possible, complaints may be made by telephone or in person.

What Information Should You Provide When Making a Formal Customer Service Complaint?

The following information should be provided:

- Name, address and telephone no(s).
- Herd Number if applicable
- State briefly exactly what you are dissatisfied with
- The date(s), name of office, and if appropriate, the name(s) of the official(s) who dealt with you.

Data Protection

We are committed to meeting our obligations under Data Protection legislation.

Therefore:

- If your complaint involves personal information, you may be requested to provide proof of your identity (e.g. **copy** of Driver's Licence or Passport).
- If you are acting on behalf of another person you will not be given access to personal information of that person unless you provide the Department with the signed expressed consent and a copy of a state signed ID of that person (e.g. **copy** of Driver's Licence or Passport).