



Office of the
**Refugee Applications
Commissioner**

Customer Charter



Customer Charter

At the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner, we are committed to delivering a high-quality service to our customers. This charter sets out the standards of service you can expect from us.

Our Commitments

1 Quality service for all

We are committed to making sure that our services take into account the needs of all our customers whatever their background, and in particular, the needs of those groups identified in equality legislation.

2 Personal callers to our office

- Our office will be open from 8.45 am to 4.00 pm Monday to Friday (apart from public holidays).
- We will try to keep waiting times in our reception areas to a minimum.
- If you have an appointment we will see you promptly when you arrive.
- We will deal with you politely and as quickly as possible.
- We will keep our reception and waiting areas clean and tidy, and will improve our facilities where necessary.
- If you need an interpreter, we will provide one.
- We will continue to review and improve our access for our customers with disabilities.

3 Documents

- We will produce all documents (such as forms and information leaflets) in as user-friendly a format as possible and in an appropriate range of languages.

4 Phone enquiries

- We will answer your calls from 9.15 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Thursday and from 9.15 am to 5.15 pm on Friday (apart from public holidays).
- We will deal with your call politely and as quickly as possible.
- We will give you our name and tell you which unit we work in.
- If we cannot deal with your enquiry promptly, we will explain this and arrange to call you back or write to you as soon as possible.
- If we have to transfer your call, we will tell you who we are transferring you to and why.

5 Correspondence

- We will acknowledge all correspondence (letters, e-mails or faxes) within five working days of receiving it.
- We will send you a full reply within 20 working days or, if this is not possible, we will send you an explanation of our current position and what we will do next.
- All our letters will give a contact name and phone number.
- All our letters will be written in simple English and we will only use technical and legal terms where necessary.

6 Interviews and decisions on asylum applications

If we are interviewing you about your asylum application, we will do the following:

- We will give you written notice of the date and time of your interview.
- We will try to meet any special needs you have because of a medical condition or disability that you have told us about.
- At your interview we will give you the opportunity to fully explain your case and any fears you might have about returning to your country.
- In carrying out your interview, we will take into account your age and sex, and any traumatic experiences you have had.

- If you need an interpreter for your interview, we will provide one.
- We will assess your case fairly and independently.
- We will make a decision about your application as soon as possible after your interview.
- We will write to you with our decision and tell you what the next step in the asylum process will be. For example, if your application is unsuccessful, we will tell you about any appeal options you may have.

You will find more information about the interview process in our information leaflet for applicants.

7 Complaints

You have a right to complain if the service you receive from us does not meet the standards set out in this charter, or if you believe that any action or decision that we have taken is not in line with our rules, practice or policy. If you want to make a complaint, please write to our Customer Liaison Officer (see section 12 for details).

For all complaints we receive, we will do the following:

- Acknowledge them by letter within five working days of receiving them.
- Investigate them thoroughly.
- Send you a full reply within 20 working days or, if this is not possible, send you an explanation of our current position and what we will do next.

You will find a copy of our complaints procedure on our website (www.orac.ie) or you can contact our Customer Service Centre by phone or e-mail (see section 12 for details).

Please note that this complaints procedure does not cover our decisions about asylum applications or how we arrive at these decisions. If, after your interview, your application is unsuccessful, you can appeal to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal.

8 Consultation

We are committed to ongoing consultation with various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who represent our customers' interests. This formal consultation process involves the Customer Liaison Panel for NGOs. This panel meets every six months or more often if necessary. As part of our continuing commitment to this process, we will continue to consult members of the panel about the following:

- Our customers' interests and needs.
- The range and quality of our service.
- The accuracy of the information we supply.
- The standard of the documents we produce.
- The suitability of our service delivery methods.
- How changes in laws and regulations affect our services.
- Our planned new services.

We will also continue to hold regular meetings with the various governmental organisations involved in the asylum process to deliver quality customer service.

9 Listening to you

As well as consulting NGOs, we will hold customer surveys at least twice a year to get your comments and views. These surveys will form part of our process to improve and, where necessary, change our service delivery so that we continue to meet our customers' needs.

If you want to take part in our surveys, please write to our Customer Liaison Officer (see section 12 for details).

10 Confidentiality

We will keep confidential any personal information you give us.

We may pass your information to other government agencies in line with the Immigration Act 2003 so that they can perform their legal duties. We may also pass your information to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in line with the terms of the Refugee Act, 1996 (as amended), and to other countries using the Dublin II Regulation or Dublin Convention. The Dublin II Regulation and Dublin Convention provide the legal basis for deciding which EU Member State is responsible for examining an asylum application made in another Member State (including Iceland and Norway).

11 Our website

We will make sure that our website:

- is updated regularly;
- is accessible to people with disabilities; and,
- contains relevant information for our customers and other organisations we work with.

We welcome your comments about our website, which you can send on-line.

Our website address is: **www.orac.ie**

12 How to contact us

The Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner

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Dublin 2

Telephone: 01 602 8000

Lo-call: 1890 202 418

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E-mail: oracmail@orac.ie