



Policy on Customer Complaints

Document Control	
Version Number	1.0
Issue Date	15 May 2024
Approved by Management Board	01 May 2024
Next Review Date	September 2026
Responsibility for Review	Chief of Staff

Tailte Éireann - Policy on Customer Complaints

Introduction

Tailte Éireann (TÉ) is committed to providing a high-quality service to all of our customers.

In the event that a customer is dissatisfied with the service provided, this policy outlines the process and procedures that will apply.

TÉ is committed to dealing with all complaints in a courteous, prompt and efficient manner and to using the feedback received to improve the customer experience for all our service users.

Making a Complaint

Step by step information on how to make a complaint is available on our website.

Where possible, customers should bring the complaint to the attention of the team member involved who will try to resolve the issue. If this does not satisfactorily resolve the matter, customers should email the details of the complaint to complaints@tailte.ie.

All complaints received to the mailbox will be acknowledged **within 5 working days**. A full response to the complaint will generally issue **within 20 working days**. However, in certain circumstances, where there are complex issues involved, the resolution may go beyond the deadline for a full response. TÉ aims to keep customers informed of any delays in the issuing of a response and commits to keeping the customers updated on progress where such circumstances occur.

If customers are not satisfied with the manner in which a complaint has been dealt with, customers may lodge a complaint to the Customer Experience Manager.

Role of the Customer Experience Manager

The role of the Customer Experience Manager is to facilitate any customer in furthering a complaint, to ensure that the complaint is dealt with by the most appropriate team member, and to issue a comprehensive response. You may contact the Customer Experience Manager using the following details:

email: CustomerExperienceManager@tailte.ie

post: Tailte Éireann, Government Buildings, Golf Links Road, Roscommon, F42 NC84

phone: +353 (0)90 66 32721

When a complaint is received by the Customer Experience Manager, they will investigate the issues raised and request a report from the relevant manager.

Upon completion of the investigation, and having reviewed all relevant documents, the Customer Experience Manager will respond by post or by email to the complainant.

If the complaint is upheld, T   will take the appropriate actions to remedy the issue at hand including providing details of any redress or recourse open to the complainant.

Role of the Ombudsman

If Tailte   ireann does not succeed in resolving a complaint made by a customer, the customer may refer the complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use.

The best way to contact the Ombudsman is by:

- **Clicking on the ‘Make A Complaint’ link at www.ombudsman.ie**
- Or writing to: Office of the Ombudsman, 6 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, D02 W773
- Or calling the Ombudsman on 01 639 5600 if you have any queries or if you need help making your complaint.

Where the complainant writes to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman’s Office will request a report from T   on the matter and will consider whether the customer has grounds for complaint. T   will cooperate with any request from the Ombudsman to assist them in their investigation, including the sharing of all reports or correspondence on the matter as required.

Unreasonable or Unacceptable Behaviour

Under the Public Sector Equality and Human rights Duty T   is committed to protecting the rights of both employees and those who use its services. T   also takes seriously its statutory obligations to protect the welfare, dignity and safety of every member of staff, none of whom will be required, nor feel obliged, to deal with any customer who is exhibiting threatening, abusive or offensive behaviour.

Handling unreasonable behaviour can absorb a disproportionate amount of time and resources which could be better used in the public interest.

Unreasonable behaviour may take the form of:

- Unreasonable persistence in pursuing an argument that has already been addressed or re-framing the complaint to present it as a fresh issue.

- Unreasonable arguments such as the customer presenting irrelevant arguments and/or insisting that their interpretation of legal, technical or other issues should be accepted as correct.
- Unreasonable demands and lack of cooperation, for example:
 - a) Demanding their complaint is not to be dealt with by a particular team member when they are the most appropriate person to deal with the case.
 - b) Seeking an alternative decision on a registration case that can only be appealed to court.
 - c) Demanding that the opening hours of a public office be changed to facilitate them.
 - d) Making multiple queries in relation to the same issue to the same team or multiple team members.

Unacceptable behaviour may take the form of:

- Threats or actual physical harm.
- Behaviour or language (verbal or written) that may cause staff to feel offended, afraid, threatened, insulted or degraded.
- Harassment based on race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, disability or other protected characteristics.
- The recording (audio or visual) of any team member, other customers, or of documents showing any personal data, without the explicit prior consent from all parties.

In all circumstances where any customer displays unacceptable behaviour as outlined above, an incident report will be completed and kept on record. Should the behaviour persist, a decision to terminate all contact with the customer may be made.

Unreasonable or Unacceptable Behaviour at any of our Public Offices

If a customer's behaviour becomes unreasonable or unacceptable at one of our public offices, the local office manager may make the decision to refuse to deal with the customer in person and to restrict future access to our public offices. An incident report will be completed and kept on record. The local office manager will make a decision on whether to initiate steps to disengage with the customer.

Unreasonable or Unacceptable Behaviour on Telephone calls

Guidelines for all team members have been put in place for dealing with abusive telephone calls. This involves three stages, summarised as follows:

Stage 1 – the caller will be given one warning regarding their behaviour.

Stage 2 – if the abuse continues, the team member will terminate the call in a controlled and polite manner.

Stage 3 – the team member will log the incident by completing an Incident Report Form.

Where abusive or unreasonable telephone calls persist, the caller will be referred to the relevant manager. Having reviewed the incident report(s), the manager may make the decision to restrict or refuse all telephone contact with the caller under the Customer Disengagement Policy.

Unreasonable or Unacceptable Behaviour in Written Communications

In the case of written communications, where a customer displays unreasonable persistence on a matter where we have nothing further to add, the correspondence will be referred to the Customer Experience Manager for response. On their recommendation, the Chief of Staff will review the case and may give a direction on progressing disengagement with the customer.

Disengaging with Customers

It is understood that people may act out of character in times of distress or due to frustration. However, if that frustration turns to aggressive or abusive behaviour towards a team member, or involves unreasonable requests that are taking an excessive amount of staff resources, TÉ may make a decision to disengage with an individual as a last resort.

In all cases, a report on the matter will be referred to the Chief of Staff to make a decision to disengage with a customer or service user. The customer will be advised of the actions taken as a result of any decision made to disengage. Possible actions that might be considered include:

- requesting contact in a particular form (e.g. written only)
- requiring all contact to take place with a named team member
- restricting telephone calls to specified days and times
- restricting access to our public offices
- asking the customer to enter into an agreement about their future conduct

Ultimately, and as a last resort, where the behaviour shows no signs of improving, it may be decided to terminate all contact with the individual. Where the Chief of Staff has made a decision to disengage in that manner, managers will be informed of the decision and the action taken and they will advise the appropriate staff.

A review of the original case file, the severity of the action taken, and any correspondence or engagement with the individual from when the decision to disengage was made, will be completed after a period of six months from the date of last contact.

Customer Disengagement Log

Where the Chief of Staff has taken a decision to limit interaction with a customer or service user pursuant to this policy, the decision will be recorded on the Disengagement Log. The Log will be accessible on the internal systems to Senior Management only. The contents of the log are for internal reference only and will, on no account, be disclosed to anyone outside of Tailte Éireann.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, all public bodies have an obligation to fulfil the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty which seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination, to promote equality and protect the human rights of customers, staff and service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans.

Tailte Éireann is committed to meeting our obligations under the Act and will continue to review and report annually on the fulfilment of these statutory requirements.

Additional information

Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 -
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/25/enacted/en/html>

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 -
<https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/10/enacted>