

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL



CUSTOMER CHARTER

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

To deliver high quality services to you in an effective and caring manner.

COURTESY & CONSIDERATION

You are at all times entitled to be served:

- Promptly and in a courteous manner
- With due regard to privacy and confidentiality
- By helpful staff

OPENNESS & IMPARTIALITY

We undertake to:

- Deal with you in a fair and open manner
- Discuss any aspect of your dealings with us.
- Explain how a decision was reached

ACCESS

We endeavour to:

- Provide clean, accessible public offices
- Facilitate customers who wish to conduct their business through the medium of the Irish language.
- Facilitate access for people with disabilities and special needs.

REVIEW

Our services will be continually reviewed and improved upon where necessary.

YOU CAN HELP US TO HELP YOU

- By providing full and accurate information
- By letting us know when we do something well.
- By making comments, complaints or suggestions about the services you receive.

Kilkenny County Council have in place a Complaints Procedure for Customers dissatisfied with the quality of service received. A Copy of same can be obtained at our Customer Services Desk or by e-mailing us at info@kilkennycoco.ie.

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

CODE OF CONDUCT

Kilkenny County Council aims to provide a high quality of service, in a safe and secure environment. In order to achieve this, we would ask our customers to note that the following behaviour will not be accepted in any of our facilities. This Code of Conduct has been established for members of the public who use the facilities and services provided by Kilkenny County Council.

Please note that the following behaviour is **not** acceptable:

- Behaviour which is disruptive and interferes with the use and enjoyment of the facility by others.
- Harassment of staff or members of the public by use of offensive or inappropriate language.
- Use of violence or threat of violence toward staff and/or members of the public.
- Malicious damage to and/or theft of Kilkenny County Council property
- The use of alcohol and illicit drugs while using Kilkenny County Council premises.
- Personal property being left unattended while using Kilkenny County Council facilities.
- Smoking is prohibited within Kilkenny County Council premises.
- Please refrain from using mobile phones while transacting Council business.

Please help us to encourage the responsible and considerate use of Kilkenny County Council facilities by observing the Code of Conduct.

Kilkenny County Council are committed to delivering the best possible service to you in an effective and caring manner. Our Customer Charter outlines how we will deliver this service. This Charter states that at all times you are entitled to be dealt with in a courteous and considerate manner and with openness and impartiality.

If you feel that the standard of service provided by Kilkenny County Council has failed to meet these requirements, you may wish to make a complaint. You may do this by completing and submitting our Complaint Form [*on the Kilkenny County Council website*], by contacting our Customer Services Desk or by e-mailing us at info@kilkennycoco.ie.

Complaints should not be anonymous and should be made on the appropriate form.

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS PROCEDURE

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly and not in accordance with the Customer Charter, you may wish to make a complaint. You can do so by asking for a Supervisor or Office Manager. Our staff will make every effort to resolve your complaint at this stage. If you are not satisfied you may make a formal complaint.

HOW DO I MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT?

You should address your complaint to the Complaints Officer, Corporate Affairs. Complaints should be made in writing using the complaints forms and guidelines available at all our public offices and on our website. A complaint can also be made by fax or by e-mail. If a complaint is deemed valid it will be forwarded to the responsible person in the area to which the complaint refers.

WHEN CAN I EXPECT A RESPONSE?

All complaints will receive a reply. We will issue an acknowledgement within five working days and a full response no later than 28 days of receipt of complaint. You will be advised if there will be any deviation from this timescale and kept informed of progress.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE?

If you are dissatisfied with the response you can appeal to the Director of Services, Corporate Affairs. An internal review will then be carried out and a final decision made within 4 working weeks.

We hope that we have been able to resolve your complaint satisfactorily. However, if you remain unhappy with our response then you can refer your complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use.

The Ombudsman will ask you for details of your complaint and a copy of this letter/email (our final response to your complaint). The best way to contact the Ombudsman is by:

- Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at www.ombudsman.ie
- 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.

NOTE:

The complaints and appeal procedure does not apply to decisions of Kilkenny County Council where there is a statutory appeal process nor does it interfere with your rights under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997.

COMPLAINTS -INTERNAL PROCEDURE

COMPLAINTS OFFICER: ANNE MARIA WALSH, CORPORATE SERVICES

All formal complaints must be made on the appropriate Form and forwarded to Complaints Officer, Corporate Affairs who will be responsible for co-ordinating replies.

The following persons are designated as the Officers responsible for dealing with specific complaints within their service areas.

SERVICE	DESIGNATED OFFICER
AREA OFFICES	Ian Gardner, Senior Engineer, Kilkenny Stan Cullen, Area Engineer, Ferrybank Philippe Beubry, Area Engineer, Castlecomer Declan Murphy, Area Engineer, Callan/Thomastown
COMMUNITY	Anne Marie Shortall, Senior Executive Officer
FINANCE	Noelle Brett, Financial Accountant
FIRE SERVICES	John Collins, Chief Fire Officer
HOUSING	Michael Leahy, Senior Executive Officer
CORPORATE AFFAIRS	Anne Maria Walsh, Senior Executive Officer
HUMAN RESOURCES	Marie Phelan, Senior Executive Officer
INFORMATION SYSTEMS (IS)	Kevin Hanley, Head Information Systems
LIBRARY	Josephine Coyne, County Librarian
MOTOR TAX	Stephen O'Connor, Administrative Officer
PLANNING	Denis Malone, Senior Planner
ROADS/WATER	Seamus Kavanagh, Senior Engineer
ENVIRONMENT	Michael Arthurs, Senior Executive Officer
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Aileen McGrath, Head of Enterprise
TOURISM	Martina Comerford, Administrative Officer
PARKS/SPECIAL PROJECTS	Frank Stafford, A/Senior Engineer

Where customers are unhappy with the decision an appeal can be made in writing to Director of Services, Corporate Affairs. An internal review will then be carried out and a final decision made.

It is intended to work within the following time limits:

- Acknowledgement within 5 working days
- Response within 28 Days of receipt of complaint
- Appeal within 4 working weeks

The above appeal procedure does not apply to decisions of Kilkenny County Council where there is a statutory appeal process nor does it interfere with your rights under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997.



KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE CHONTAE CHILL CHAINNIGH



Kilkenny County Council is committed to providing an efficient and courteous service to all our customers.

If you are dissatisfied with the quality of service you received, please return this form to:

- *Complaints Officer, Corporate Affairs, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny,*
or
- *E-mail to info@kilkennycoco.ie.*

Your complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the complaints and appeals procedure adopted by Kilkenny County Council.

[PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK PRINT]

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ E MAIL ADDRESS(OPTIONAL) _____

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT:

Directorate: _____ Section/Division: _____

Date: _____

Cause of Complaint:

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date Complaint Received: _____	Referred to/Date: _____
Reference Number: _____	Date Acknowledged: _____
Date Decision Issued: _____	Appeal Received: _____
Appeal Decision: _____	

CUSTOMER ACTION PLAN

In their dealings with the public Kilkenny County Council are committed to taking a number of significant steps over the next number of years to improve its services. Some of these will yield immediate improvements at certain points of contact such as improvements in information technology, improvements to public offices and improved quality of the telephone service.

Kilkenny County Council is committed to the following:-

QUALITY SERVICE STANDARDS:

Publish a Customer Charter that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

EQUALITY/DIVERSITY:

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

PHYSICAL ACCESS:

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with special needs.

INFORMATION:

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication.

Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

TIMELINESS & COURTESY:

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

COMPLAINTS:

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

APPEALS:

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

CONSULTATION & EVALUATION:

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

CHOICE:

Provide a range of choices, where feasible, in service delivery. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES EQUALITY:

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

BETTER CO-ORDINATION:

Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

INTERNAL CUSTOMER:

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

Kilkenny County Council are committed to the principles of Quality Customer Service approved by the government and has introduced this Action Plan which sets out how we will implement these principles and achieve our service targets over the next four years. In addition we will integrate training on customer service issues into general training courses and council procedures and practices. Improvements in service delivery are expected to arise from increased utilisation of information and electronic technologies. These include the new financial management system. A customer service ethos will be promoted throughout the organisation and customers and staff will be encouraged to comment and improve upon existing practices.

CUSTOMER ACTION PLAN:***What you can expect from us?***

Kilkenny County Council are committed to delivering an efficient courteous and quality service to its customers. We will treat all our customers equally ensuring that there is no discrimination on any grounds. We will be sensitive to our customers needs and take into account their age, their capacity to understand often complex rules and procedures and any disabilities they may have.

When providing service by telephone we will aim to:

- Staff will be available to take your call from 9.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.
- Be helpful and provide you with clear and accurate information.
- Always give you a contact name and telephone number.
- Respond properly and courteously.
- Take details and call you back if we cannot answer your query immediately.
- Indicate when you can expect to hear from us if we have to call you back.
- Provide an improved telephone system for our customers.
- Keep internal telephone directories up-to-date.

If you visit our offices we will aim to:

- Meet with you punctually if you have an appointment
- Respect your privacy.
- Deal with you in a polite, courteous and fair manner.
- Deal with your enquiry and provide any relevant information that we have as quickly as possible.
- Keep our offices clean and safe.
- Continue to improve accessibility for all our customers including people with a disability and special needs.

Note: Due to work commitments it may be necessary to make an appointment in advance to meet with some members of staff.

In corresponding with you we will aim to:

- Use clear and simple language and keep the technical terms to a minimum.
- Include a contact name, telephone and extension number, e-mail address and reference number on all correspondence that we issue.
- Make arrangements to ensure that letters do not go unanswered when individual staff members are absent.
- Some correspondence requires considerable research before a full reply can issue and when this happens we will send you an interim reply explaining the position.
- Ensure that service departments are allocated an e-mail address.
- Ensure that all payments are made in accordance with provisions of the Prompt Payments Act, 1997.

In producing forms and leaflets we will aim to:

- Ensure that leaflets and forms are freely available, including in electronic format.
- Use clear and simple language.
- Explain exactly what information is required on application forms.
- Request only relevant information on application forms.
- Ensure that data supplied on forms will only be used for the purpose for which it is given.
- Produce all documentation in a range of accessible formats suitable to the needs of people with disabilities.

Complaints:

- If you are not happy with the quality of service we provide you are entitled to make a complaint to the section head of that service.
- If you are not satisfied with the response received, you should contact the Complaints Officer, Corporate Affairs, in writing, who will respond to your complaint in writing within twenty eight days of receipt of complaint.
- We hope that we have been able to resolve your complaint satisfactorily. However, if you remain unhappy with our response then you can refer your complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is fair, independent, and free to use.
- The Ombudsman will ask you for details of your complaint and a copy of this letter/email (our final response to your complaint). The best way to contact the Ombudsman is by:
 - **Clicking on the 'Make A Complaint' link at www.ombudsman.ie**
 - 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.
- All complaints will be dealt with properly, fairly and impartially.

Information and Communications Technology:

- New technology will be availed of to the greatest possible extent to make services more accessible and improve service delivery.
- Over the period of the plan the information technology systems within Kilkenny County Council including the telephone system will continue to be upgraded.

Staff:

- Kilkenny County Council will ensure that staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.
- A comprehensive customer service-training programme for our staff will be implemented throughout the plan period.

Co-Ordination of Services:

- Kilkenny County Council will foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivering of services.
- Kilkenny County Council will provide during the plan period one-stop shop facilities for the public.

Official Language Equality:

- Kilkenny County Council will provide in so far as possible quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

Choice:

- Kilkenny County Council will provide a range of choices, where feasible, in service delivery.
- Kilkenny County Council will use available emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

Consultation and Evaluation:

- Kilkenny County Council will provide a structural approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to development, delivery and review of services.
- will use the Strategic Policy Committees as one of the approaches to evaluating our service delivery.
- Kilkenny County Council will provide a comment sheet on our website [www.kilkennycoco.ie] to facilitate customers who may wish to make suggestions or comments on the services which we provide.

Review of Customer Action Plan:

- Kilkenny County Council will review the customer action plan on a yearly basis and will take into account feedback from its customers and the strategic policy committees.
- Kilkenny County Council's Customer Service Working Group will meet on a quarterly basis. Monitoring the Customer Action Plan will be one of the key tasks within this groups remit.