

POBAL CUSTOMER ACTION PLAN

2019 - 2021

Pobal and its Customers

The delivery of effective, quality customer service is a priority area for Pobal and forms an integral part of our overall Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and the strategies of individual departments within Pobal.



The purpose of this Customer Action Plan and the Customer Charter that accompanies it, is to set out in clear terms how we provide our customers with the highest level of service.

The Role of Pobal

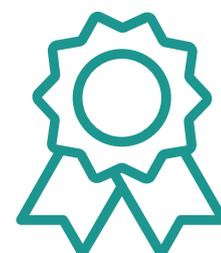
Pobal's mission is to work with Government and local and national community organisations to combat social exclusion and to improve outcomes for communities, families, individuals and children. Pobal works to provide an efficient and robust programme and grant management service for the Irish Government. This work is underpinned by high standards in accountability of allocations and financial management and ongoing support to all that we serve.



Pobal interacts with a broad spectrum of internal and external customers including the Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection and the Department of Health.

Quality Customer Service Initiative (“QCS”)

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (“DPER”) developed a Quality Customer Service Initiative whereby public service organisations must ensure that they are providing the highest level of service to all of its customers in accordance with 12 principles of quality customer service.



Pobal is wholly committed to providing this superior level of service and to following the below mentioned principles:

12 Principles of Quality Customer Service

(As published by DPER, 2000)

1. Quality Service Standards

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



2. 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.



3. 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 specific needs.



4. Information

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate; that 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.



5. Timeliness & Courtesy

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



6. Complaints

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



7. Appeals

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



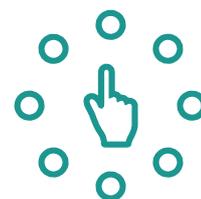
8. Consultation & Evaluation

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.



9. Choice

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.



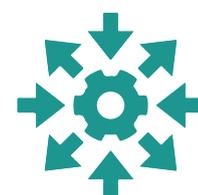
10. Official Languages Equality

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.



11. Better Co-ordination

Foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.



12. Internal Customer

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



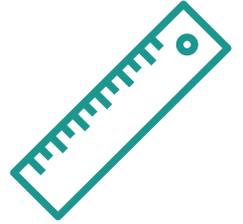
These principles are reflected in Pobal's Customer Charter (Appendix A).

Measuring & Evaluating Performance

Pobal employs a range of mechanisms to measure and evaluate our performance against the standards set out in our Customer Charter and Action Plan, to ensure that we continue to deliver the highest levels of service to our customers.

In monitoring our performance, we will:

- Benchmark our performance against previous results
- Use internal information management systems to inform our customer service policies
- Comply with all applicable health and safety standards or regulations and carry out safety audits and disability audits.



Service Standards

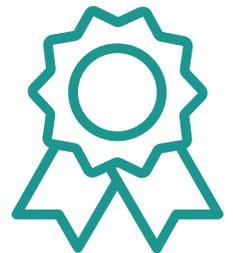
- Our Customer Charter outlines in broad terms the level of service all customers of Pobal are entitled to expect.
- To enable us to meet the commitments in our Charter, Pobal strives to evaluate the performance of its customer service based on reliant indicators and to report upon the result of these evaluations.



Performance Indicators

Quality Service

- Keep all customers fully informed of the standards of service they can expect to receive from us.
- Make easily available, copies of the Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan to those who wish to have a copy.



Equality / Diversity

- Maintain a focus on equality/diversity issues throughout Pobal
- Treat all customers equally, in accordance with relevant legislation.



Physical Access

- Allow easy and full access, where authorised, to our buildings for those customers with disabilities and/or specific needs.
- Keep our buildings clean, comfortable and compliant with health and safety standards.



Information

- Provide clear, timely and accurate information which is fully accessible for any customers with specific needs.
- Publish useful and relevant information on our website, in line with guidelines in terms of accessibility and official languages equality.
- Keep information distribution channels as up-to-date as possible and maintain pace with the most recent technological developments and innovations in media and communications.
- Make every effort to ensure that information is made available in as many different formats as is practicable.



Timeliness & Courtesy

- Treat customers with courtesy and endeavour to handle all enquiries as promptly and as efficiently as possible.
- Staff to provide names when taking calls with customers
- Respond to voicemails promptly
- Provide full contact details on all written or email communications from Pobal.



Complaints

- Treat complaints promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- Acknowledge all complaints
- Fully investigate all complaints where possible and provide a prompt reply to the complainant
- Where this is not possible, an interim reply will be given, explaining the reason for the delay and advising when a substantive response will issue.
- Should the complainant so require, keep details of the complainant private.



Choice

- Keep multiple contact options open for Pobal customers including telephone numbers, e-mail and website addresses.
- Embrace innovation to ensure that Pobal makes full use of new and emerging technologies to broaden the choice of services available to customers.



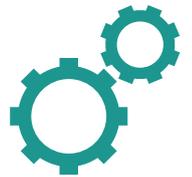
Official Languages Equality

- Where possible, Pobal will attempt to provide staff who can cater for callers who may wish to be dealt with through Irish via telephone. This may not always be possible however Pobal will ensure that any written request received in Irish is responded to in Irish.
- Make available key documents published by Pobal such as the Annual Report and key in both Irish and English, as required by the Official Languages Act 2003.



Better Co-ordination

- Maintain co-ordination across Directorates within Pobal to improve co-ordination on service provision and delivery.



Internal Customer

- Develop more effective internal channels of communication to allow staff to gain a fuller understanding of all aspects of the role of Pobal.



Training

- We recognise that in order for staff to provide a quality service they must be familiar with the policies and practices outlined in the Customer Action Plan and with the commitments given in our Customer Charter. We are fully committed to investing in appropriate customer service training for staff and to do regular refresher training where necessary, particularly for those members of staff in regular contact with members of the general public.



Statutory Obligations

- In addition to undertakings given in our Customer Action Plan and Customer Charter, we believe it is important that all Pobal staff are aware of their statutory obligations. Pobal is fully committed to fulfilling all relevant obligations some of which relate to data protection, equality, freedom of information, prompt payment of accounts and safety, health and welfare at work. This list is not exhaustive and Pobal seeks to regularly check its compliance within its legislative and regulatory framework.



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