



Improving Customer Services and Experiences for our People and our Customers



CONTENTS

1. Foreword from Secretary General Oonagh McPhillips	02
2. Introduction	04
3. People-Centred Services	06
Department Values	06
Who Are Our Customers	07
• Personas	07
Service Design	08
Accessibility and Choice	08
Measuring Customer Experience	09
How This Plan Was Drafted	09
• 2025 Approach to This Plan	10
4. Commitments and Actions	12
Guiding principles of Quality Customer Service	13
Commitments And Actions Detailed: Access, Experience, Feedback	14
5. Evaluation and Reporting	26
• Conclusion	27
6. Appendix	28





FOREWORD

From Secretary General Oonagh McPhillips

I am pleased to present the Department's Customer Service Action Plan and Charter

The Plan

This three-year Plan commits to putting the public good at the heart of everything we do. We live our values through our work, including in particular our interactions with the public.



Last year, our Interim Customer Service Action Plan focused on accessibility by rewriting our Customer Charter in plain English. We also revised our complaints procedure to make it easier for customers to make a complaint where necessary and to support our teams to respond meaningfully in these circumstances.

Since then, we have rolled out a range of customer-focused digital initiatives which have provided us with some feedback from users and useful an opportunity to identify further improvements to our services.

The needs of all our customers are growing in both volume and complexity and I expect this will continue. Meeting these needs requires us to work together effectively to deliver our services in innovative ways. We must continue to develop our agility and work collaboratively to deliver high quality services to the public we all serve.

1|Foreword

This Plan was developed by the Justice Customer Service Working Group which drew on the experience of colleagues from across the Department. I greatly appreciate the efforts of everyone involved. Building on the work done in our Interim Plan, colleagues have developed specific actions and targets which are ambitious in scope.

But they are also realistic – these actions can be delivered within the timeframes set out, and the Working Group will monitor implementation to hold us to account for the commitments we are making here.



As a provider of a range of sensitive public services, our Department is committed to continually innovating to customer service. As our work become increasingly digitised, it's important that the needs and experiences of all our customers continues to shape the redesign or enhancements of our delivery channels

Throughout this Plan, our aim is to monitor and report on progress under each action while we listen and value our customers' feedback and continue to identify future actions.

I hope that this Plan demonstrates our commitment to listening to, valuing, and delivering for our customers and people and I look forward to many positive impacts from its implementation over the coming years.

Oonagh McPhillips





INTRODUCTION

Customer Service Action Plan 2025-28 has been developed to improving customer services and experiences for our people and our customers.

What We Do

The Department of Justice is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, fair, and inclusive Ireland. We work to strengthen community and national security, uphold justice and equality, and protect human rights. To achieve this vision, we focus on

Six key objectives:

- Access to Justice
- Tackling Crime
- Community Safety
- Immigration to Ireland
- Security
- Supporting Victims



2|Introduction

This Plan addresses the touchpoints between our organisation and the people we are working for. Whether applying for a permission, renewing a license, or visiting one of our websites, the objective of this Plan is to deliver a positive, user-friendly experience to the public.

The actions and commitments in this Plan look broader than traditional customer service interactions and consider the end-to-end customer journey.

Customer Service Action Plan

We have developed and published this Action Plan in line with key government strategies ① that are guiding civil and public services towards delivering increasingly people-centred, digital services. Despite the variety of our customers' situations and needs, and the increasingly complex environment in

which we deliver services, our customer's principal goal has not changed – they want it to be easy and efficient to get what they need from our services.

Through the collaborative actions and commitments laid out in this Action Plan, we want to work together as an organisation to help customers achieve this goal.



PEOPLE-CENTRED SERVICES

Department Values

- **Open** We will be responsive and informative, communicating to make meaningful connections
- **Collaborative** We will work together with others in trust and partnership
- **Professional** We will be impartial, accountable and ethical





3 | People-Centered Services

Civil Service Values

- Independence
- Respect
- Fairness
- Integrity
- ImpartiallyEquality
- Who are our customers?

'Our customers' are defined as individuals, groups, communities, professionals, or businesses that interact or transact with our Department to receive or benefit from the services, programmes, or resources we provide.

'Our People' describes Department staff, contractors and stakeholders who may interact with the department to provide input on policies and programmes or be impacted by the Department's decisions and actions.

Personas

The Justice Customer Service Working Group have developed a suite of personas to represent some of the people who would typically interact with our organisation. This has been done to increase awareness of who our customers and people are, to promote empathy, and to inform the commitments and actions of this Plan. A persona is a fictional, yet realistic description of a typical customer or one of our people.

When creating a new service or customer touchpoint, the Service Design team utilises a diverse range of personas.

Sample Persona



Maria Digital Accessibility Needs

English Fluency - 3/5

Low O O O O High

Digital and technical Ability - 4/5

Low O O O High

Information Needs - 3/5

Accessibility Needs - 5/5
Low O O O O High

Frustration Level - 3/5

Overview

Maria is a 32-year-old woman from Brazil. She's currently living in Treland and considering applying for permanent residence. She has issues with her vision which can affect her differently day to day. Sometimes she can navigate websites in low light settlings, but tends to struggle with smaller text, dense blocks of text, or text with a low contrast ratio to the background. On her bad days, she often needs to resort to screen reader software to help her.

Needs and Goals

- Maria needs DoJ websites to be accessible in all situations, regardless of her vision on a particular day. This means clear navigation, good contrast, and appropriate text size.
- Maria needs information to be presented in a clear and concise way. Dense blocks of text and overly technical language will make it difficult for her to understand the information she needs.
- When vision issues require it, Maria needs websites to be fully compatible with screen reader software. This ensures she can access all necessary information without visual limitations.

Pain Points

- Dense and cluttered websites with overwhelming amounts of information, small text, and poor contrast ratios make it difficult for Maria to find what she needs and can cause eye strain.
- Websites that lack proper coding for screen readers leave Maria unable to
 access information independently. Missing alt text for images and unclear page
 structure create additional barriers.
- Legal, overly technical language, or lengthy blocks of text can make it difficult
 for Maria to understand the information she needs and can lead to confusion and
 frustration.





3 | People-Centred Services

Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data, these personas aim to capture our user's needs, goals and pain points when trying to achieve their goals with us.

Service Design

A good service is one that has been designed around a deep understanding of the person who uses it and what they're trying to achieve. Service Design is an approach to designing services from the user's viewpoint.

Aligning to the government's Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services ② our Department launched a Service Design Playbook that lays out the service design process from start to finish.

This is an invaluable tool that will support teams in growing their understanding of what Service Design looks like in practice and how they can adopt processes that help them to enhance their user's experience and increase citizens trust.

The Goal of This Plan

This Plan aims to support the Department in continuing to mature as a service-lead organisation. Through the commitments and actions in this Plan, we will promote the delivery of user-centred services as a primary organisational goal.

Accessibility and Choice

This Plan acknowledges that our customers have diverse needs and abilities and rely on a variety of channels to engage with our services.

Accessibility for our people and customers is a priority within our Department. Our dedicated Access Team run seminars and events promoting opportunities to improve accessibility for everyone who engages with us.

The first theme within this Plan looks exclusively at accessibility. Our primary commitments and actions focus on improving the accessibility of our websites,

application forms and letters and public offices. With the continued guidance of the Access Team and having regard to the Principles of Universal Design ③ we will deliver services that are accessible to everyone.

This Plan has been created conscious our responsibility under the Public Sector Duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights of staff and service users.



² gov.ie - Action Plan for Designing Better Public Services <u>View Link</u>

 $[\]begin{tabular}{ll} \hline \end{tabular}$ Principles of Universal Design $\begin{tabular}{ll} \hline \end{tabular}$



Measuring Customer Experience

The range of services delivered to the public by our Department is broad, from supporting victims of crime to delivering a fair and robust immigration system.

How do we collect data in a consistent way to determine whether our customer has had their needs met and that their experience with us has been a positive one?

What type of indicators can be collected easily and support teams in continuously improving service delivery and customer service?

Customer Experience KPIs

By testing and defining a set of standard 'customer experience' (CX) key performance indicators (KPIs) to be used gradually by every customer facing team over the term of this Plan and into the future, we can continue to design and roll

out seamless, accessible and simplified services that enhance process efficiencies and provide value for money.

Despite the variety of Departmental services and customer needs, establishing CX KPIs will ensure that all divisions are aiming to deliver consistent customer experience throughout our organisation.



How This Plan Was Drafted

This Plan was drafted collaboratively by members of the Justice Customer Service Working Group comprised of staff from customer facing teams across the organisation. Members were asked to draw upon recent customer data and insights to identify actions and commitments that would positively impact their customer's experience and meet their needs. For example, results from 2024 customer surveys for immigration applicants revealed that, for a percentage of customers, there is still a need for easier website navigation, improved communication channels and clarity around application processes.

The service design team also ran an internal staff survey to analyse the readiness and understanding of staff to adopt a more usercentred way of working. 34% of staff said that their teams were already using customer data and analytics to improve service delivery, while 50% said that they are interested in this approach but would need further tools and training to apply it.

If you would like to learn more about how this Plan was drafted please contact

insights@justice.ie



2025 Approach to This Plan

The Customer Service Action Plan 2025:



Builds on existing commitments made in the 2024 Interim Customer Service Action Plan



Aligns to key Government strategies:

- Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy
- Connecting Government 2030
- Better Public Services



Applies best practice in usercentred design in government and public entities nationally and internationally



Adopts a design mind-set, incorporating the 10 design principles for Irish Government



Together, we have defined our commitments to customers, and set out actions to achieve these through measurable outcomes





Guidelines for preparation of Customer Action Plans and Charters

Guidelines for preparation of Customer Action Plans and Charters (4) published by the Quality Customer Service Network recommend a four step cycle of consultation, commitment, evaluation and reporting:



Consultation

 Consult with staff and customers to agree on commitments and guiding principles for 2025 and beyond.



Commitment

 Commit to a set of actions that meet customer's needs and align to the twelve principles of Quality Customer Service.



Evaluation

 Track progress on our commitments and actions to assess performance to develop future actions.



Reporting

Review and report back on progress of actions.

Customer Action Plans and Charters Diagram







COMMITMENTS AND ACTIONS

This Plan is underpinned by the 12 Guiding principles of Quality Customer Service (5). These guiding principles have been divided within three themes:

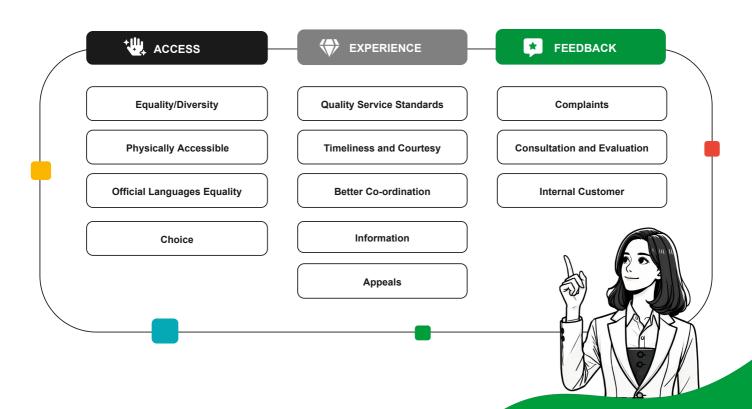
Plan Themes

- Access Make services, buildings, information, and websites more accessible to customers
- Experience Enhance customer interactions across channels
- Feedback Shape and improve services by collecting insights, opinions, preferences and complaints from our customers and our people





Guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service





4 | Commitments & Actions | Access

1.1 Increase Accessibility of Department Websites



Work towards achieving an AA rating on public facing Department and agency Wordpress websites by updating content and layouts to comply with web content accessibility guidelines.

IMT Strategy, Architecture, and Development

Y3

Development

1.2 Use easy-to-understand language in our written communication and website content



• Action	Owner(s)	♠ Target/Outcome	Timeline
Standardise and simplify language on our immigration website, communication letters and application forms for customers as part of the Immigration Modernisation Programme.	Immigration Service Delivery Modernisation Team	Customers can understand correspondence and application forms more easily and are less likely to need assistance from staff or third parties in identifying appropriate forms.	Y1-2
Simplify language used in published content and correspondence within the Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal.	Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal	Uptake in plain English training among staff and improved comprehension from customers of important documents and letters	Ongoing
Strengthen the process of reviewing written content before it is published on core Justice websites and internal Portal, to ensure it is clear and accessible for internal and external customers.	Transparency	Clear and accessible language is standard on internal and core Justice websites. Standardised procedures are in place for proofing and prepublishing checks of content.	Ongoing



4 | Commitments and Actions | Access

1.2 Use easy-to-understand language in our written communication and website content



Action	Owner(s)	🖟 Target/Outcome	Timeline
Encourage and provide training opportunities for staff on plain English training.	Organisation Design and Development, Transparency	Increased awareness/uptake/availability in plain English training among staff - Simplified language within published content and correspondence	Ongoing
Publish an easy-to-read information booklet explaining the coronial process for all bereaved family members.	Dublin Coroners Service	Families of bereaved receive clear and supportive information when they need it.	Y1 - Ongoing
_	nd and meet the needs of	ACCESS VULNER	RABLE CUSTOMER
_	nd and meet the needs of	ACCESS VULNER (C) Target/Outcome	RABLE CUSTOMER
Train customer facing staff to understanerable customers Action Signpost staff and managers to relevant learning pathways on the Learning Management System that equip teams to effectively understand and meet the needs of vulnerable/at risk customers.			



4 | Commitments and Actions | Access

1.4 Continuously increase the accessibility of our public offices



• Action	: Owner(s)	← Target/Outcome	Timeline
Review and implement recommendations of 2024 accessibility audit carried out on key areas of Department Headquarters (51 St Stephens Green) where feasible, in collaboration with OPW.	Facilities	Improved physical environment for external customers visiting Department offices	Y1
Run accessibility audits on identified public facing Justice offices, review, and implement recommendations where practical and feasible.	Facilities, Access Officer	Improved physical environment for external customers visiting Department offices	Y1-2
i Promote and encourage the internal use ovide quality customer services and public		ACCESS	IRISH LANGUAGE

• Action	Owner(s)	← Target/Outcome	Timeline
Maintain a list of Irish language speakers that can be accessed easily by staff dealing with the public.	Transparency	Staff know where and how to contact an Irish speaking staff member efficiently to provide service to Irish speaking customer.	Ongoing
Irish language versions of major Department publications will be made available alongside the English language version on the Department website.	Transparency	Irish language versions of major publications are available alongside English language version.	Ongoing



2.1 Increase the use of emerging technologies to enhance customer service



• Action	Owner(s)	Target/Outcome	Timeline
The Department's intranet (internal staff webpage) will be upgraded to a new advanced site that will enhance collaboration, communication and make important resources easily accessible to staff.	Transparency, Change, Technology and Innovation	Increased levels of collaboration among staff - Staff have easier access to information and shared resources, easier onboarding.	Y1-2
As part of the Immigration Service Delivery Modernisation Programme, use customer and staff feedback to develop and enhance the Digital Contact Centre self-service portal.	Immigration Service Delivery, Change, Technology and Innovation	CSAT score, metrics indicate that Immigration Service Delivery applicants have a positive customer experience and high upta ke of technology.	Y1
To continue to enhance our customer's experience of Immigration Service Delivery, a new case management system will replace legacy IT systems.	Immigration Service Delivery	Easier usage of services for both applicants and staff	Y1-2
Within the International Protection Office, upgraded IT systems will improve workflows and reduce processing times. The launch of a digital customer portal and a new digital application form to replace paper- based solutions will streamline and improve the customer's experience throughout the application process.	International Protection Office	Improved user experience for internal and external users through enhanced work flows - reduced processing times and an digitised application form for applicants.	Ongoing



2.1 Increase the use of emerging technologies to enhance customer service



• Action	Owner(s)		Timeline
A new Justice learning hub within the current OneLearning System has been created. This provides bespoke learning pathways for each grade (Clerical Officer to Principal Officer) and will include easy access to relevant customer service training.	Organisation Design and Development	Guided access to relevant training to support learners	Y1
Upgrade the current paper-based process of reporting a death to the Dublin District Coroner with a new, user-friendly, digital process.	Dublin Coroners Service	An efficient, digital-first approach adopted for reporting deaths to the Dublin District Coroner	Ongoing
Launch a refreshed website for the Dublin District Coroner's Office with new functionality including website contact forms and an online submission form for nursing home deaths.	Dublin Coroners Service, Transparency, IT	Improved user experience for the public and nursing home staff interacting with Coroner service	Ongoing



2.2 Upskill and empower frontline staff to deliver quality customer service



• Action	:2: Owner(s)	← Target/Outcome	Timeline
Increase the uptake of Customer Service training in front facing teams	Human Resources, Customer Insights, Customer Service Working Group	Customer Service training placed as a learning need within PMDS Learning and Development Plan for frontline staff	Y1
Increase staff awareness on access to translation services for written material to all Departmental staff.	Customer Service Working Group, Translation Team	Staff have understanding of use case, timelines and capabilities of translation services within the Department.	Y1
New Family Support Team in the Dublin District Coroner's Court will develop and implement a proactive approach to supporting bereaved family members.	Dublin Coroners Service	All bereaved family members are contacted by the Family Support team within one month of the death occurring and any issues or difficulties are identified and addressed.	Ongoing



emails.

4 | Commitments and Actions | Experience

2.3 Support teams in building a measurement culture



Action Owner(s)

Target/Outcome

Timeline

Identify, test and define a set of customer experience KPIs for recommended use across all public facing teams within the Department.

Customer Insights

An agreed set of CX metrics are used by customer facing teams across the organisation to gain insight into their customer's experience and make informed decisions about service improvements.

Y1

2.4 Create awareness of our customer service standards and the type of service our customers can expect to receive from us



Action	Owner(s)	Target/Outcome	Timeline
Display the Customer Charter prominently in our public offices and on our website. While ensuring staff continue to provide a best possible service and advice.	Department wide, Customer insights	Customer can expect our commitment to the best possible levels of service and standards, such as timely response to queries, and identifying ourselves and unit in all forms of communication.	Y1
Increase customer's awareness of expected wait times for particular services through automated	Customer Service Working Group, Translation Team	Department wide	Ongoing



2.4 Create awareness of our customer service standards and the type of service our customers can expect to receive from us





Publish customer experience metrics and customer service reports within our annual report.

throughout their functions.

Customer Insights, Customer Service Working Group, Transparency Metrics and outcomes of actions within this Plan are reported on within the Department's annual report. Staff across the organisation are aware of the Customer Service Working Group and the Customer Service Action Plan and understand that quality customer service is a priority.

Ongoing

2.5 Promote best practice in Customer Service through Departmental and cross agency networking and coordination



Action	:≜: Owner(s)	Target/Outcome	Timeline
Members of the Justice Customer Service Working Group will attend Customer Service seminars, events, and civil service networks such as the Quality Customer Service Network.	Customer Service Working Group	Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to customer service across the Civil Service.	Ongoing
The Customer Service Working Group will promote and share learning and innovative practice in customer service topics, collaborating with Internal Communications to disseminate information	Customer Service Working Group, Transparency, Customer Insights	Learnings and innovative practices from other departments will be shared to teams through Customer Service Working Group.	Ongoing



3.1 Provide an effective, timely complaints procedure to customers



• Action	Owner(s)	(Target/Outcome	Timeline
Provide new complaint guidance document to staff.	Department wide, Customer Service Officers	Staff feel supported in handling complaints and teams do so with greater consistency across teams within the Department.	Y1 - Launch
Implement revised internal procedure for handling customer complaints.	Department wide, Customer Service Officers	Complaints are dealt with in a more timely manner and customer satisfaction is improved.	Y1-3
An effective and appropriate complaints procedure is in place in the Dublin District Coroner's Court.	Dublin Coroners Service	All complaints, particularly from bereaved family members, are addressed in an efficient, professional and sensitive way.	Ongoing

3.2 Increase opportunities and channels to gather customer feedback



Action	:2: Owner(s)	(Target/Outcome	Timeline
Provide support, expertise and tools to teams running customer surveys.	Research and Evaluation, Customer Insights	Increase in references to customer feedback and data in business Plans and cases, strategy documents and change programmes	Y1-3



3.2 Increase opportunities and channels to gather customer feedback



• Action	: Owner(s)	🕟 Target/Outcome	Timeline
Increase staff awareness of and access to website feedback tools and analytic platforms.	IMT Development	Improved understanding of customer's use and behaviour across smaller Department websites leading to improved UX design and content	Y1-3
Gather customer feedback through the Family Support team in the Dublin District Coroner's Court to improve customer service.	Dublin Coroners Service	Continuously improved customer experience based on feedback received	Ongoing
very			JPPORTING STAFF
Support staff in applying customer-centrovery	ed approach to service	FEEDBACK SU	Timeline
very			



3.3 Support staff in applying customer-centred approach to service delivery





Action	:A: Owner(s)	(Target/Outcome	Timeline
Create guidance on directly engaging Department users for the purpose of gathering qualitative research supporting product development or enhancing services.	Customer Insights, Research and Evaluation, Organisation Design and Development	Teams are empowered to conduct research with customers including hard to reach or vulnerable customers	Y2-3
Host Department wide events and seminars on how to make our services more customer-centred.	Customer Insights, Customer Service Working Group	All staff are given opportunity to increase their skills and apply customer-centred approaches within their roles.	Y1-3

3.4 Engage broadly with customer representative groups when making decisions about our services







Promote, share and provide support to teams implementing staff guidelines on stakeholder engagement.

Transparency, Research and Evaluation

Clarity for teams seeking to engage advocacy groups or host public consultations for the purposes of policy or service development

Y1



3.5 Provide tools, training and supports that guard the health, safety and wellbeing of frontline staff serving distressed customers



• Action	:2: Owner(s)	(Target/Outcome	Timeline
Re-establish a network of Wellbeing Champions within the Department and redevelop the central Wellbeing programme JustBe based on the Civil Service Health and Wellbeing Framework.	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Increased awareness of positive health and wellbeing lifestyle choices among staff	Y1
Create a safe and supportive work environment by effectively managing psychological risks, promoting psychological safety, and nurturing positive cultural development.	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Improved mental health and reduced stress and anxiety for staff	Y1-3
Facilitate the provision of training in conjunction with Health, Safety and Wellbeing to promote wellbeing and reduce psychological and emotional risk. Training will be determined by the front-line wellbeing project.	Organisation Design and Development	Improved wellbeing outcomes	Y1-3
Develop and promote Internal Customer Charter to promote quality service standards among staff.	Customer Service Working Group	Increased awareness of the importance of treating staff with courtesy and respect	



EVALUATING AND REPORTING

Our next step in the four-step cycle is evaluation of progress and reporting on results.





5 | Evaluation & Reporting

By regularly evaluating our efforts we will ensure accountability for delivery of the commitments we've made, facilitate learning and continuous improvement in customer service, and identify and develop future actions.

Members of the Customer Service
Working Group will continue to play a lead
role within their functions by participating
in quarterly working group meetings,
providing updates to the group on the
progress of actions they are responsible
for. These updates will contribute to an
overall annual report on the outcomes of
commitments and actions within this plan.

Additionally, it is also the intention of the Working Group to carry out a mid-term review on the implementation process of actions from the Plan and to consider any potential new actions for the second half of the Plan's lifecycle.

Conclusion

Increased digitisation within the public sector presents new opportunities to make our services more customer centred. The objective of this Plan is to support our Department in developing a customer-centred mindset and approach to designing, delivering, and measuring our services.

Our priority is to provide services that work effectively for customers regardless of the channel they choose. We want to continue to provide a personal, compassionate experience for those in vulnerable or distressed circumstances.



To be customer-centred we must strive to listen to our customers and make better decisions based on our increased understanding.

In developing, publishing, and actioning this plan, we continue to embody the Departmental values of being Collaborative, Open and Professional - working together through the Customer Service Working Group and associated stakeholders to champion a user-centred approach and drive a measurement culture within teams.

Work is just beginning, actions and commitments have been made, and now we need to deliver and continue to identify areas for improvement.

Does this plan inspire you to learn more, or do you have an idea that could positively impact service delivery or customer experience in your team? We rely on staff with a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of the people who interact with us.

Feedback, Questions, and Ideas are Always Welcome

insights@justice.ie.



APPENDIX

- Customer Charter Link
- Complaint Procedure Link

