



Údarás Náisiúnta Míchumais
National Disability Authority

NDA Customer Service Action Plan

What is a Customer Service Action Plan?

A Customer Service Action Plan contains information regarding the quality of service we aim to provide to you. When you contact our offices our staff will deal with your query in an effective, efficient and reliable manner. Delivering a high standard of service to our customers is a key priority for the NDA.

In order to maintain and improve our service, the NDA has adopted codes of practice (e.g. Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies) to underpin its relationship with customers. All members of staff are made aware of their obligations under these codes of practice and receive ongoing training and support in meeting these standards.

About the NDA:

We are the independent statutory body that provides information and advice to the Government on policy and practice relevant to the lives of persons with disabilities. We have a role to assist the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in the co-ordination of disability policy.

The NDA's offices are located in Dublin. Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, staff have moved to a 'blended' working arrangement of partial remote work and partial onsite work. Contact details for our offices and main services can be found at <https://nda.ie/about-us/contact-us/>.

Our Customers and Stakeholders:

Our main customers are the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and the Minister of State for Disability Issues. We are legally responsible to provide information and advice to the Minister in accordance with our statutory mandate. Other customers include:

- Public sector bodies;
- Other Ministers;
- Government departments;
- Government agencies;
- Semi-state organisations;
- Persons with disabilities and their representative organisations’
- Standards bodies;
- Industry;
- Professional bodies;
- Educational institutions

Implementing the Principles of Quality Customer Service

The NDA is committed to advancing the principles of Quality Customer Service, thereby further improving the level of our service to our customers. We set out below what actions we take to achieve these principles in practical terms.

I. Quality Service Standards

Principle: '*publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service that customers can expect and display it prominently at the point of service delivery*'.

I. We publish a Customer Service Charter for display to our customers.

Performance Indicator(s):

- The Customer Charter and other appropriate information is available on our website, www.nda.ie and in the NDA offices.

2. We keep under review the quality of service delivered to our customers on an ongoing basis and address any issues that may arise as appropriate.

Performance Indicator(s):

- This action plan and the Customer Charter are reviewed regularly as part of internal governance processes

3. We promote and increase awareness of the 12 principles of quality customer service set out by the Department of Public, Expenditure & Reform, among NDA staff and our customers.

Performance Indicator(s):

- This action plan and the Customer Charter form part of any new NDA employee's induction pack

2. Equality/Diversity

Principle: *'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 (on 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 services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion and for those facing geographic barriers to service.*

The NDA is committed to dealing with all of its customers in a professional manner, according fair and equal treatment irrespective of race, gender, socio-economic status, language, disability and other social attributes

4. We ensure that customers and staff are treated equally and with fairness in all of their dealings with us.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Feedback from customers and levels of complaints received.
- Adherence to provisions of Equality legislation

5. We ensure that equality and diversity are central to the NDA's policy development.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Compliance with Equality legislation and principles.

6. We promote staff awareness of equality and diversity through

information sessions and training.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Training events held and information and advice provided to staff as required. The NDA-produced “Disability Equality Training for Public Service Staff” online course is available to all staff.

7. We implement the principles of the 'Code of Practice for the Employment of People with a Disability in the Irish Civil Service' and monitor our compliance with the employment targets under Part 5 of the Disability Act 2005.

Performance Indicator(s):

- The principles are implemented and employment targets are achieved. Since its establishment in 20, the NDA has reached and exceeded the statutory target every year.

3. Physical Access

Principle: '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'

8. We ensure that up to date health and safety statements are in place for NDA offices and that adequate safety procedures are in place in case of emergencies that may arise.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Health and safety statements are in place and implemented. A work programme is drawn up which includes a review of safety statements, risk assessment and training.

9. We ensure that all building works undertaken are done so with accessibility in mind.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Accessibility and the requirements of persons with disabilities are fundamental to the values of the NDA and are incorporated insofar as is possible in all building works. This will continue to be incorporated in all future works and implement actions where required.
- The NDA's Disability Access Officer will work to address issues relating to physical access.

4. Information

Principle: 'Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate; is available at all points of contact and meets with requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and 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.'

10. We will meet the statutory requirements in relation to the processing of requests made under the FOI legislation and we will publish non personal/private information about requests received online.

Performance Indicator(s):

- The relevant statutory requirements are met.
- The log of FOI requests is published in a timely manner

11. We are committed to complying with the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

Performance Indicator(s):

- As part of our obligations under section 8 of the Act, we set out information about the NDA - through our Freedom of Information (FOI) Publication Scheme - that can be made available to anyone who wants to read it. Information is available under six key headings:
 - Section A: Information about the National Disability Authority
 - Section B: Services provided or to be provided to the public
 - Section C: Decision making process for major public policy proposals
 - Section D: Financial Information
 - Section E: Procurement
 - Section F: FOI disclosure log and other information to be published routinely
- In relation to the processing of requests made under the FOI legislation, we publish a log of FOI requests in a timely manner.

12. We aim to reach the highest standards in communicating our work externally.

Performance Indicator(s):

- We produce an Annual Report about all our activities each year and make these available through the NDA website.
- We develop a new strategic plan every three years to ensure that our work remains relevant to the changing disability policy and practice landscape. These plans are made available on the NDA website.
- Our team carries out and commissions research that helps us deliver independent, evidence-informed advice and guidance to Government on

disability policy and practice. Research, policy advice and submissions are available on the NDA website.

13. We seek to foster strong and open engagement with people with disabilities and the wider community.

Performance Indicator(s):

- We provide Easy to Read, Large Print and Irish versions of information leaflets and publications when requested and where relevant.
- We use clear language in our forms and information leaflets.
- We encourage feedback and open communication through the use of surveys, email, telephone and post.
- We provide Irish Sign Language interpretation and live captioning during events and meetings where required.
- We use available Information Technology software and systems to host and facilitate meetings when in-person gatherings are not feasible for some or all participants.
- We have put together advice on the appropriate language to use when speaking or writing about disability.

14. We serve our online audience comprehensively, in the most accessible manner possible.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Details about upcoming NDA events are available to view on the 'News and Events' section of the NDA website. Accompanying information leaflets are provided in accessible formats.
- Information is regularly shared through the NDA and CEUD Twitter profiles.
- Recordings of previous NDA events - where relevant - include captioning and are made available to the public through the NDA and CEUD YouTube channels, and the NDA website.

15. We ensure the NDA's website is accessible in line with the EU Web Accessibility Directive to guarantee all users enjoy equal access.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Content is checked against the NDA-produced guidance and best practice for accessibility before being uploaded.
- Web content is regularly monitored for relevance, accuracy and accessibility.
- The NDA's Disability Access Officer works to address issues relating to accessibility and information.

16. We offer multiple channels through which an individual can get in contact if the NDA has not complied with sections 25, 26, 27, 28, or 29 of the Disability Act 2005.

Performance Indicator(s):

- An individual can make a complaint to the NDA in-person, in writing, by phone, by fax, over email, with minicom and or with an assistant.
- An inquiry officer will maintain an electronic or paper file for each complaint and will acknowledge receipt of the complaint no later than five working days after receipt.

17. Personal data obtained from our customers is kept securely, lawfully and accurately, processed only for the purposes for which it was gathered and retained for no longer than it is necessary to do so.

Performance Indicator(s):

- The NDA meets all its responsibilities under the Data Protection Acts.
- All issues raised in relation to personal data are dealt with promptly and fairly. [NDA Privacy Policy](#).

5. Timeliness and Courtesy

Principle: 'Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and with minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer. Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.'

18. We behave in a manner which is appropriate to the business environment and are polite and courteous in our dealings with colleagues and customers.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Feedback received from our customers via the various feedback mechanisms mentioned above in section 4.

19. We raise awareness amongst staff of the guidelines and recommended procedures in relation to answering telephone calls and dealing with correspondence.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Relevant staff members are aware of the guidelines and recommended procedures in place.

20. Staff provide full contact details in all e-mail communications and

will utilise automatic out of office and voicemail facilities when not in the office.

Performance Indicator(s):

- All staff provide name, address and telephone numbers in their e-mail signatures.
- All staff use voicemail and out of office replies when unavailable.

6. Complaints

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

21. We publicise our complaints procedure on our website, www.nda.ie and in our Customer Charter

Performance Indicator(s):

- Ease of access to Complaints Procedure and Customer Charter on the NDA website

22. We monitor queries and complaints received in the NDA's customer service mailbox – nda@nda.ie

Performance Indicator(s):

- Queries are addressed and complaints are dealt with in a timely manner in accordance with the complaints procedure

23. We raise awareness of the customer complaints procedure among staff and arrange further training if necessary.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Information and advice is provided to staff and training needs are identified and addressed where required

24. We address all complaints in accordance with the procedures set out in our Customer Charter.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Complaints are dealt with in accordance with the prescribed procedures

7. Appeals/Reviews

Principle: '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.'

25. We ensure that customers are aware of the options available to them when they are dissatisfied with a decision made by the NDA.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Details of the appropriate appeals procedures are incorporated the NDA's Customer Charter which is available to view on the NDA website

8. Consultation and Evaluation

Principle: '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.'

26. We ensure that, where possible, any changes to services or policy development will involve consultation with key stakeholders to allow them to have an input into the process.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Customer input is sought and considered in the development of policies and services.

9. Choice

Principle: '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.'

27. We provide greater choice for our customers in the range of services from the NDA

Performance Indicator(s):

- Flexible range of payment methods
- Variety of different communication channels
- Options for remote/in-person attendance at meetings, launches etc.

10. Official Languages Equality

Principle: 'Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through both of the official languages.'

28. We publish information explaining what services are available in Irish and we provide this as part of our Customer Service Charter and on the NDA's website to promote awareness of specific services available.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Information is published

29. We ensure that, when developing the NDA website and providing information online for our customers, electronic systems are developed that are capable of providing information in Irish.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Maintenance of bi-lingual and Irish only content on NDA website.

30. We will make information booklets and other corporate publications available to our customers in both official languages (within the same cover wherever possible).

Performance Indicator(s):

- Relevant publications, such as Annual Reports and Strategic Plans, as well as application forms etc. are produced in Irish and English.

31. The NDA's stationery, main signage and main pre-recorded telephone announcements is in both official languages.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Stationery, main signage and main pre-recorded telephone messages are bilingual.

11. Better Coordination

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

32. We continue to work closely with Government Departments and public bodies to ensure that approaches to strategies and policies for which we have responsibility, or in which we have a particular interest, are consistent and that shared objectives are achieved.

Performance Indicator(s):

- A coordinated approach is adapted to policy and legislative development and implemented

12. Internal Customer

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

33. We treat our staff as we would like to be treated ourselves. Our dealings with each other are marked by courtesy, professionalism,

friendliness, mutual respect, approachability and teamwork. Our work environment will be places where dignity and respect are to the forefront of our values and in which each individual is aware of his/her responsibility to behave in a way that reflects a culture of dignity and respect.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Implementation of the provisions of Dignity at Work Policy and provision of training to staff as necessary
- A productive, coherent and effective working environment.
- A workplace based on inclusion, openness, respect and duty of care.

34. We provide a reassuring, safe environment in which our staff can raise issues or concern regarding potential wrongdoing that has come to their attention in the workplace, absent from fear of penalisation or other consequences, in accordance with our Protected Disclosures policy.

Performance Indicator(s):

- We fully implement our policy and procedures in relation to the making of a protected disclosure by staff.
- Protected Disclosures training is offered to all NDA staff and Authority members on an ongoing basis

35. We ensure that all of our offices and workplaces are clean, safe, compliant with occupational health and safety standards, and facilitate, where relevant, access for staff with disabilities and others with special needs

Performance Indicator(s):

- All workplaces are safe, hygienic and accessible.
- The NDA's Access Officer works to facilitate ease of access for staff members with disabilities and increase awareness of disability issues within our organisation.

36. We will clearly identify learning and development needs through PMDS and in consultation with staff to ensure that business and training needs are addressed.

Performance Indicator(s):

- Development of a learning and development strategy
- Delivery of staff training needs as identified through the PMDS process