



## Complaints Procedure:

A Guide for Customers

**NIEA** Northern Ireland  
Environment  
Agency  
[www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)



<b>Contents</b>		<b>Page</b>
1.	Introduction	3
2.	What is a complaint?	3
3.	If you have a complaint	3
4.	If you want to appeal against our decision on environmental activities	4
5.	If you decide to complain about our standard of service	4
6.	If you decide to complain under freedom of information	6
7.	How to contact us	7
8.	Addresses and phone numbers of main country parks, monuments and centres	9
9.	Further helpful information	10

We have tried to include as much information as possible in this publication but it may not cover all the details you need.

## 1. Introduction

We hope you never have a reason to complain about a service we provide, but we realise that problems may sometimes arise and things can go wrong.

If you have a complaint we want you to tell us so that we can investigate it. If we have made a mistake we will apologise and try to put things right. We will do everything possible to improve the service we provide.

We also want you to tell us when we have done a good job and to hear any suggestions you may have about how we could improve our service.

**The postal and e-mail addresses and phone numbers you need to make a complaint or enquiry are listed in section 6 on pages 6 to 10.**



## 2. What is a complaint

A complaint is a written or spoken expression of dissatisfaction because we have not provided the standard of service promised in our **Customer Charter** or **Environmental Legislation and Service Standards**.

We would like to sort out problems on the spot if possible - if you phone us or visit. Otherwise, you may contact us by letter, or by e-mail through our website [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk) selecting 'contacts'.

## 3. If you have a complaint

We have set up our complaints procedure to tell you about your right to complain, how to make a complaint and how we will deal with it. You should give us as much detail as possible when you write to us so that we can investigate the matter thoroughly. We would like to make sure we communicate effectively with you during this process, so please tell us if you have a specific need, such as speech, sight, hearing or language difficulties.

### If your complaint is about our general standard of service

(That is, where our action did not meet our commitment to you as set out in our **Customer Charter** or **Environmental Legislation and Service Standards**.)

Follow the steps set out in section 5 on pages 4 & 5.

### If your complaint is about us providing information under the Freedom of Information Act

(That is if your complaint is about how we have dealt with:

- a request under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000;
- a request for environmental information under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004; or
- a request for personal information under the Data Protection Act 1998.)

Follow the steps set out in section 6 on page 6.



## If your complaint is about a member of our staff

(That is, if, for example, you believe that a member of staff has acted improperly.)

You need to write to:

**Deputy Director of Human Resources & Organisational Change**  
Department of the Environment  
Room 5-26  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 3GB.

We will acknowledge your complaint within three working days and process it in line with the Department's Disciplinary Procedures. As the action we take depends on the circumstances of each case, the Head of Personnel, Development and Services will write to you to explain how we will handle your particular complaint.

## 4. If you want to appeal against our decision on environmental activities

This complaints procedure **does not** cover appeals against a decision we have made or a complaint about environmental activities.

If you want to comment or ask a question about, for example:

- our refusal to give permission or a licence;
- an activity in relation to your land or property;
- enforcement action;
- the facilities at our country parks or historic monuments; or
- an environmental activity you have witnessed or which affects you;

contact the person you have been dealing with or the Unit which looks after the activity you are concerned about. (Contact details are given on pages 8 & 9.)

## 5. If you decide to complain about our standard of service

The steps you need to take are set out below. If you cannot settle the matter at any stage, move on to the next step in the procedure.

### Step 1

- We would like to sort out problems on the spot if possible, so please speak to the person you have been dealing with, either at the property you visited or the office where the staff member works.
- Otherwise you should write to, or e-mail, the section concerned.

(Contact details are given on pages 8 & 9.)



## Step 2

- If you cannot sort the matter out at Step 1, write to our Customer Co-ordinator (address on page 7) to make a formal complaint, stating clearly that you are doing so.
- The Customer Co-ordinator will write to you within three working days to confirm that we have received your complaint and to say who is dealing with it and when you can expect a reply. This will normally be within 15 days but, if the matter is complicated and will take longer, we will tell you when you can expect a reply.
- If we are at fault we will apologise and give you a full explanation. If we have failed to meet our standards, we will take action to put matters right.



## Step 3

- If you are still not satisfied you can write to the Chief Executive at Klondyke Building (address on page 7).
- The Chief Executive will review your complaint and reply within 10 working days, or let you know when you can expect a reply.

## Step 4

- If you are still not satisfied you can ask a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) to raise your complaint with the Assembly Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. It does not have to be your local MLA.
- The Ombudsman will usually expect you to have gone through our complaints procedure before he or she will accept your complaint. However, there may be circumstances where you find this difficult and the Ombudsman may be prepared to accept your complaint directly.

The Ombudsman's address is:

The Ombudsman  
Freepost BEL 1478  
Belfast  
BT1 6BR.

Phone: 028 9023 3821

E-mail: [ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk) .

Website: [www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk) .



You can also ring the information service free of charge on 0800 343424.

The Ombudsman will let you know if your complaint will be investigated further.

## 6. If you decide to complain under Freedom of Information

### Step 1

If you have a complaint about how we have dealt with a request for information under:

- the Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- the Environmental Information Regulations 2004; or
- the Data Protection Act 1998;

you should write to the Department of the Environment's Departmental Information Officer at:

#### **Department of the Environment**

Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB.

Phone: 028 9054 1123  
E-mail: [foi@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:foi@doeni.gov.uk)

You will receive a reply not later than 20 days after the date of your enquiry.

### Step 2

If you are not satisfied with the response at Step1, write to:

#### **Deputy Director of Human Resources & Organisational Change**

Department of the Environment  
Room 5-26  
Clarence Court  
10-18 Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 3GB.

You will receive a reply as soon as possible but normally within 40 working days.

### Step 3

If you are still not satisfied you can ask the Information Commissioner to review the matter. The address is:

#### **Assistant Information Commissioner for Northern Ireland**

Room 101  
Regus House  
33 Clarendon Dock  
Laganside  
Belfast  
BT1 3BG.



Phone: 084 5630 6060  
E-mail: [ni@ico.gov.uk](mailto:ni@ico.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## 7. How to contact us

If you have any questions about this charter, contact:

### **Customer Co-ordinator**

Eamon Campbell at **Klondyke Building** (see below)  
phone: 028 9056 9213  
e-mail: [eamon.campbell@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:eamon.campbell@doeni.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about freedom of information or data protection, contact:

### **Information Management Section**

Ian Minford at **Klondyke Building** (see below)  
(also Data Protection Officer)  
Phone: 028 9056 9271  
E-mail: [ian.minford@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:ian.minford@doeni.gov.uk)

Our main headquarters is at:

### **Klondyke Building**

Cromac Avenue  
Gasworks Business Park  
Lower Ormeau Road  
Belfast  
BT7 2JA

Phone: 0845 3020 008

Website: [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)



The Units in **Klondyke** are listed below.

Unit	Head of Unit	Phone	E-mail
Biodiversity Unit	Michael Meharg	028 9056 9562	mike.meharg@doeni.gov.uk
Conservation Designations and Protection	Diane Stevenson	028 9056 9517	diane.stevenson@doeni.gov.uk
Conservation Science	Howard Platt	028 9056 9639	howard.platt@doeni.gov.uk
Countryside and Coast	Susanna Allen	028 9056 9607	susanna.allen@doeni.gov.uk
Drinking Water Inspectorate	Margaret Heron	028 9056 9294	margaret.heron@doeni.gov.uk
Environmental Crime Unit	Anne Blacker	028 9056 9803	anne.blacker@doeni.gov.uk
Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate	David Bell	028 9056 9287	david.bell@doeni.gov.uk
Land and Resource Management	Vacant	028 9056 9381	pamela.patterson@doeni.gov.uk
Regional Operations	Bob Bleakley	028 9056 9582	bob.bleakley@doeni.gov.uk
Strategy Group	Stephen Aston	028 9056 9390	stephen.aston@doeni.gov.uk
Historic Buildings Unit North	Manus Deery	028 9054 3144	manus.deery@doeni.gov.uk
Historic Buildings Unit South	Brian McKervey	028 9054 3130	brian.mckervey@doeni.gov.uk
Historic Monuments Unit North	Brian Williams	028 9054 3042	brian.williams@doeni.gov.uk
Historic Monuments Unit South	John O'Keeffe	028 9054 3023	john.o'keeffe@doeni.gov.uk
Water Management Unit	Vacant	028 9263 0249	noreen.mccleery@doeni.gov.uk

## 8. Addresses and phone numbers of our main country parks, monuments and centres

<p><b>Bellaghy Bawn</b> Castle Street Bellaghy BT45 8LA Phone: 028 7938 6812</p>	<p><b>Carrickfergus Castle</b> Marine Highway Carrickfergus Co Antrim BT38 7BG Phone: 028 9336 5190</p>	<p><b>Castle Archdale Country Park</b> Castle Archdale Irvinestown Co Fermanagh BT94 1PP Phone: 028 6862 1588</p>
<p><b>Crawfordsburn Country Park</b> Bridge Road South Helens Bay Bangor Co Down BT19 1LD Phone: 028 9185 3621</p>	<p><b>Dunluce Castle</b> 87 Dunluce Road Bushmills Co Antrim BT57 8UY Phone: 028 2073 1206</p>	<p><b>Peatlands Country Park</b> 33 Derryhubbert Road Dungannon Co Tyrone BT71 6NW Phone: 028 3885 1102</p>
<p><b>Quoile Countryside Centre</b> 5 Quay Road Downpatrick Co Down BT30 7JB Phone: 028 4461 5520</p>	<p><b>The Coastal Zone and North East Nature Reserve</b> 8 Bath Road Portrush Co Antrim BT56 8AP Phone: 028 7082 3600</p>	<p><b>Roe Valley Country Park</b> (Ness Country Park) 41 Dogleap Road Limavady Co Londonderry BT49 9NN Phone: 028 7772 2074</p>
<p><b>Scrabo Country Park</b> 203A Scrabo Road Newtownards Co Down BT23 4SJ Phone: 028 9181 1491</p>	<p><b>Central Region and Central Nature Reserves</b> c/o Peatlands Country Park 33 Derryhubbert Road Dungannon Co Tyrone BT71 6NW Phone: 028 3885 3930</p>	<p><b>Northern Region and North West Nature Reserves</b> Roe Valley Hospital 24 Benevenagh Drive Limavady Co Londonderry BT49 0AQ Phone: 028 7776 3982</p>
<p><b>South East Region and South East Nature Reserves</b> Quoile Countryside Centre 5 Quay Road Downpatrick Co Down BT30 7JB Phone: 028 4461 5520</p>	<p><b>West Region and West Nature Reserves</b> Castle Archdale Country Park Irvinestown Co Fermanagh BT94 1PP Phone: 028 6862 1588</p>	

## 9. Further helpful information

### **Customer Charter - Environmental Legislation and Service Standards –**

available on our website at [www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk) or by phoning our Customer Co-ordinator on 028 9056 9213.

### **The Right to Know – Public Information –**

leaflet published by Department of the Environment available on its website at [www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk) or by phoning the Information Management Branch on 028 9054 1123.

### **Department of Environment Publication Scheme –**

available on the Department of the Environment's website at [www.doeni.gov.uk](http://www.doeni.gov.uk) or by phoning the Department's Information Management Branch on 028 9054 1123.

### **Fact sheets on Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection Act –**

available from:

#### **The Information Commissioners Office – Northern Ireland**

Room 101  
Regus House  
33 Clarendon Dock  
Laganside  
Belfast  
BT1 3BG.

Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

Phone: 084 5630 6060

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[www.ni-environment.gov.uk](http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk)

Our aim is to protect, conserve and promote the natural and built environment for the benefit of present and future generations.

