

Northern Ireland Environment Agency Customer Charter



Contents

NIEA CUSTOMER CHARTER

1 About Us	2
2 About our Customer Charter	2
3 About our Staff	3
4 Information and Advice about the Environment and our Work	3
5 Service Standards	4
• answering phone calls	
• responding to letters, e-mails and faxes	
• receiving fees and charges	
• meeting you in person at our offices	
• access to public registers	
6 Freedom of Information	5
(6A) freedom of information	5
(6B) environmental information	6
(6C) data protection	7
7 If you have a Complaint or wish to comment on our service	7
(7A) about our standard of service	7
(7B) about our environmental work or our decision on your application	7
(7C) comments on our service	7
8 Running our Properties	8
9 Monuments and Buildings Record	9
10 Environmental Awareness	9
11 Responding to Water Pollution Incidents	10
12 Permit Applications	10
13 Helping our Customers	10
14 Monitoring our Performance	11
15 Other Organisations with Environmental Responsibilities	11
16 Your Rights	11
(16A) human rights	11
(16B) equal opportunities	11
(16C) disability discrimination	11
(16D) privacy rights	11
17 How to Contact Us	12
18 Addresses and Phone Numbers of Main Country Parks, Monuments and Centres	14
19 Further Helpful Information	15
20 Feedback Form	16

Note: We have tried to include as much information as possible in this booklet. However, it does not cover all the details, and is not a guide to relevant laws.

1 About us

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) is an agency of the Department of the Environment. Our aim is to protect, conserve and promote our natural environment and built heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

We do this through:

- promoting both public awareness of environmental issues and the action needed to deal with them;
- helping to control adverse human impacts upon the environment;
- working with partners to protect the environment; and
- advising the Government and other relevant organisations on environmental issues.

Information about all our work areas can be found on our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk

NIEA is committed to delivering simple and effective regulation which will provide greater protection for the environment. We have embarked on an ambitious Better Regulation Programme: (www.ni-environment.gov.uk/ehs_better_regulation_programme) to modernise and simplify regulation for businesses through more accessible guidance; streamlined, risk-based permitting and inspections; and consistent and proportionate enforcement.

A Better Regulation Board has been set up to discuss regulatory issues and ways to improve the environmental compliance and performance of Northern Ireland's businesses.



2 About our customer charter

Our Customer Charter tells you about the wide range of services we provide and the standards we aim to meet.

Our contact details are listed on pages 12 to 14.

We would like to communicate effectively with you, so please tell us if you need this charter in another language or in another format (for example, in large print, or in Braille). We have included a Browsealoud system on our website to help you to access information at: www.ni-environment.gov.uk/index/faqs/browsealoud.htm

We regulate activities that may cause pollution to land, air or water, damage our built environment, or affect our biodiversity and may cause harm to human health. The laws we work under and the standards we will meet are explained in our Environmental Legislation and Service Standards document. You can see this on our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk. If you would like a copy of the document, phone our Customer Co-ordinator on 028 9056 9213.

Our Environmental Legislation and Service Standards document tells you:

- when you may need a licence or permission for an activity that could affect the environment;
- how to apply to us for a licence or permission; and
- how to appeal against our decision.

NIEA has embarked on developing an online application and payment facility for its environmental permits.



3 About our staff

Our staff will act professionally and will always try to provide you with a helpful, polite and efficient service. We are committed to treating everyone fairly and consistently and will keep all our dealings with you confidential.

If you need advice, or want to discuss any problems or difficulties relating to our work, we will be happy to speak to you or meet you. Our staff will use clear and appropriate language, and explain any unfamiliar technical terms on request. They will also ensure that the information they give you is accurate and up to date.

Our staff will give you their names when they speak to you or write to you. Those working at country parks, nature reserves and historic monuments will wear name badges.

If you feel that we have not provided the standard of service set out in this booklet you can make a complaint by speaking to the person you have been dealing with, either at the property you visited or the office where the staff member works. There are other ways in which you can make a complaint and you can find more information and advice in our 'Complaints Procedure: A Guide for Customers' which is available on the NIEA website.

4 Information and advice about the environment and our work

We produce a wide range of publications (including leaflets, fact sheets and reports) which give information on environmental topics. These publications are listed on our website at: www.ni-environment.gov.uk or you can get a copy of the list from our Corporate Communications Unit. The e-mail address for information requests is info@doeni.gov.uk

We handle requests for environmental information under the freedom of information procedures set out in section 6 of this charter.

5 Service standards

Our service	Our standard
Answering phone calls.	<p>We aim to answer phone calls promptly.</p> <p>We will either give you the information you need or put you through to the best person to speak to.</p> <p>If we have to call you back, we will try to do so on the same day. If we think it is likely to take longer to give you a full reply, we will tell you when you can expect to get a full reply.</p> <p>Our staff will use answer-phones only when this is absolutely necessary. In these circumstances, the answer-phone message will give other contact numbers for urgent matters.</p>
Responding to letters, e-mails and faxes.	<p>We aim to give you a full reply to your letter or e-mail within 10 working days. If the matter is complex and we need longer than 10 working days to give you a full reply, we will explain this and tell you when you can expect a reply.</p> <p>If you write to us about a matter which does not involve us, we will tell you who is responsible for dealing with it and send your letter to the appropriate person.</p>
Receiving fees and charges.	<p>We will issue confirmation that we have received any fees or payments from you, usually on the day of receipt.</p>
Meeting you in person at our offices. (Our main offices are open to the public from 9:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays. Regional centres are open from 10 am to 5 pm.)	<p>If you have an appointment, the person you need to speak to will meet you at the appointment time.</p> <p>If you call into any of our offices without an appointment, the reception staff will arrange for you to speak to a named member of staff as quickly as possible.</p>
Access to public registers	<p>Public Registers are a useful source of information on consents and approvals. You can obtain access to our public registers at our main offices between 9.30 and 12.30 and between 2.00 and 3.30pm.</p> <p>More information on the type of information available can be viewed at: www.ni-environment.gov.uk/pollution-home/ippc/ipc-public-registers.htm</p> <p>A number of registers are also available on-line at: www.ni-environment.gov.uk/waste-home/public_reg.htm</p>

If you have any questions phone the Customer Co-ordinator on 028 9056 9213.

6 Freedom of information

A lot of environmental information is available in printed documents and on our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 give you access to all types of information held by us (for example, to help you to better understand how we work or make our decisions).

The information we will routinely make available is listed on the Department of Environment's 'Freedom of Information' website at www.doeni.gov.uk. You can also get a copy from the Department's Information Management Branch by phoning 028 9054 1123.

You may not be able to get all the information you ask for as, by law, we cannot release some types of information (for example, information about law enforcement, personal information about people or commercially sensitive information).



You can also get information under the Data Protection Act 1998 which, among other things, gives you the right to see personal information held about you.

You can get more information from the Information Commissioner's Office (phone 084 5630 6060) or its website at www.ico.gov.uk or email ni@ico.qsi.gov.uk.

6A Freedom of information

Our Service	Our Standard
<p>Providing information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. (Contact either the Functional Unit that deals with the matter or our Information Management section. See page 12 for contact details).</p>	<p>We aim to acknowledge your request within two working days.</p> <p>We aim to give you a full response as soon as possible but no later than 20 working days after the date we receive your request.</p> <p>If, by law, we have to refuse your request, either in part or in full, we will confirm this to you in writing, explaining the reason for our refusal.</p> <p>It may take longer to provide the information you have asked for if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is complicated or very extensive; • we have to consider if it is in the public interest for the information to be disclosed; or • we are waiting for the fee (if applicable) or confirmation of your request. <p>If our response would cost less than £600 to produce, we will usually provide it free of charge, although there may be a small charge for photocopying, printing and so on.</p> <p>We may refuse to respond to a request if we estimate it would cost more than £600 to process. However, if we agree to meet your request we will charge you the costs in full.</p> <p>You have up to three months to pay any fee. We will not reply to your request until we have received the fee and, if you pay by cheque, the cheque has cleared.</p>

6B Environmental information

You can ask for environmental information held by us. We report regularly on the state of the NI environment and publish annual environmental statistics reports. Copies of these can be viewed at: www.ni-environment.gov.uk/index/about-niea/state_of_the_environment.htm

On request, we can provide other environmental information held by us, for example relating to , discharges of effluent, waste, industrial pollution and so on. Some of this information is available to view using our online databases and interactive maps.



Our service	Our standard
<p>Providing information on environmental issues. (To ask for information you must write to either the Functional Unit that deals with the matter or our Information Management section. See page 12 for contact details.)</p>	<p>We aim to acknowledge your request within two working days.</p> <p>We aim to give you a full response as soon as possible but no later than 20 working days after the date we receive your request.</p> <p>If, by law, we have to refuse your request, either in part or in full, we will confirm this to you in writing, explaining the reason for our refusal.</p> <p>It may take us up to 20 working days more to provide the information you have asked for if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• it is complex or very extensive; or• we are waiting for the fee (if applicable) or confirmation of your request. <p>If our response would cost less than £600 to produce we will usually provide it free of charge, although there may be a small charge for photocopying, printing and so on. We may refuse to respond to a request if we estimate it would cost more than £600 to process. However, if we agree to meet your request we will charge you the costs in full.</p> <p>You have up to 60 working days to pay any fee. We will not reply to your request until we have received the fee and, if you pay by cheque, the cheque has cleared.</p>

6C Data protection

We will respect your right to privacy. We will use any personal information we collect only for the purpose we tell you about. We will destroy the information when we no longer need it and will not pass it on to third parties without your permission (unless we have to do so by law).

Our service	Our standard
<p>Supplying personal information.</p> <p>(To ask for information you must write to the Data Protection Officer in the Information Management Section. See page 12 for contact details.)</p>	<p>We will provide details of personal information we hold about you within 40 working days of you asking for it.</p> <p>If we have to refuse your request, either in part or in full, we will explain our reasons for doing so.</p> <p>We may charge a fee of £10 towards the cost of copying information.</p>

If you have any questions, phone our Information Management section on 028 9056 9722.

7 If you have a complaint or wish to comment on our service

7A Complaints about our standard of service, including Freedom of Information standards

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

If we do not meet our standards, we want you to tell us. We want to know about your complaint and we will do everything possible to improve the service we provide. We give full details of our complaints procedure in our 'Complaints Procedure – A Guide for Customers' which you can see on our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk. If you would like a printed copy, phone our Customer Co-ordinator on 028 9056 9213.

7B Complaints about our environmental work or our decision on your application

If your complaint is about our policies, how we have interpreted the law or about an activity which has damaged the environment, contact the Functional Unit responsible for the matter. Similarly, if you want to challenge a decision on any application you have made to us, contact the head of the appropriate Unit.

Contact details for our different Functional Units are given on pages 12 and 13.

7C Comments on our service

We will carry out a survey of our customers [at least every two years] to monitor our service standards and to ensure that they are acceptable to our customers. The results of the survey will be published on our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk.

We welcome any comments that you may have on the quality of our service, good or bad, and have made available online at: www.ni-environment.gov.uk a customer feedback form which can be completed and returned to us electronically or in hard copy to our:

Customer Co-ordinator at Klondyke Building (see page 12) e-mail: eamon.campbell@doeni.gov.uk

8 Running our properties

We own or manage historic monuments, country parks and nature reserves for people to visit and enjoy. You can get a list of our properties that are open to visitors, together with details of opening times and facilities available, from our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk 'places to visit'.

You can also phone our Regional Operations on 028 9056 9587 / 9584 or contact the property concerned.



Our service

Running historic monuments, country parks and nature reserves.

Our standard

We will clearly display opening times and any admission fees at the entrance to properties.

Staff at our properties will answer your questions, though not all of our properties are staffed.

We will take all reasonable and practicable steps to make sure visitors are safe.

Wherever possible we will provide access for people with disabilities.

We will provide and maintain public areas and toilets for visitors. However, we need you to help keep monuments and parks clean, so please use the litter bins provided at sites or take your litter home with you.

We aim to keep our country parks clean of dog waste and will provide special bins at country parks. However, we rely on you to use the bins and to follow any local guidance on controlling dogs at our properties.

9 Monuments and Buildings Record

The Monuments and Buildings Record contains a wide range of information, photographs and drawings of monuments and buildings in Northern Ireland. Some of this information is available to view using our online databases and interactive maps, and others are free to view in our Monuments and Buildings Record search room.

Our service	Our standard
<p>Providing access to information held in the Monuments and Building Record. (The office is open between 9.30 am and 1 pm, and then between 2 pm and 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday - except public holidays).</p>	<p>You can have free access to the Monuments and Buildings Record search room at: Waterman House, 5-33 Hill Street, Belfast BT1 2LA.</p> <p>We may charge a search fee if your enquiry is detailed or lengthy.</p> <p>For a note of our conditions of entry to our Monuments and buildings record, copyright, photographic reproductions, photocopying and standards of service see www.ni-environment.gov.uk/built-home/information/monuments_and_buildings_record/monuments_and_buildings_record_mbr/conditions_of_entry.htm</p>
<p>Providing information, photographic prints, and so on.</p>	<p>We will respond to your request within 15 working days. If we cannot reply in full within that time, we will explain why and tell you when you can expect a full reply.</p>

If you have any questions, phone 028 9054 3004 / 3006.

10 Environmental Awareness

We make information about the environment widely available. We do this through publications, events, exhibitions and advertising campaigns. Our tour guides run awareness and education programmes at some of our country parks and historic monuments.

Our service	Our standard
<p>Giving information about our programme of events.</p>	<p>We will provide information about the programme of events we organise throughout the year, many of which are held at our properties. You can see this programme of events on our website www.ni-environment.gov.uk or get a leaflet by phoning our Corporate Communications Unit on 028 9056 9272.</p>

11 Responding to water pollution incidents

We respond to all reports of water pollution we are told about that has harmed, or could harm, the environment. We have good working relationships with other local and regional organisations dealing with pollution, including the emergency services and those responsible for emergency planning in central and local government.

Our service	Our standard
Receiving reports of water pollution.	We run a 24-hour water pollution hotline on 0800 807060. You can ring this number to report pollution anywhere in Northern Ireland.
Assessing reported pollution (not necessarily by going to the site).	We will assess and classify all reports of pollution and then decide on an appropriate response, within 30 minutes.
Responding to a pollution incident initially classed as 'high severity' or 'medium severity'.	We aim to start an investigation at the site within two hours (if this falls within the working day) or four hours (at all other times) of the incident being assessed.
Responding to a pollution incident initially classed as 'low severity'.	We will be on site within one working day of the incident being assessed.
Feedback on pollution incidents	Where possible, when we are told about an incident we will let the person who reported it know what the problem was and what we have done to fix it.
Health and Safety	The health and safety of our investigating officers is of paramount importance at all times.

If you have any questions, phone 028 9262 3154.

12 Permit Applications

The Environmental Legislation and Service Standards booklet contains further information on standards and timescales relating to permit applications. A copy of this is available on the NIEA website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk.

13 Helping our customers

We aim to provide a service that meets the needs of all our customers. We find out our customers' opinions by carrying out customer surveys. We also welcome comments at other times. If you are pleased with a service we have provided please tell us. If you are not pleased or have a suggestion for improvement we would also like to hear from you.

We keep in touch with our customers. For example, every day our staff meet customers from the general public, industry, agriculture and education.

As part of the Better Regulation programme, NIEA is running a series of seminars for businesses, starting in September 2009. These will cover a range of regulation-specific and sector-specific issues. The purpose of these seminars is to raise awareness of environmental regulations and the benefits of compliance and good practice and to provide tailored advice and support to industry.

Individual members of staff also represent us by serving as members of outside organisations, giving lectures and attending public inquiries, court cases and tribunal hearings. Some staff are also frequently in contact with the press.

NIEA will continue to develop its online application facilities whilst providing traditional methods of submitting applications.



14 Monitoring our performance

We monitor our performance against our standards and we will publish the results in our annual report.

15 Other organisations with environmental Responsibilities

We work with other government departments and agencies, and government companies on environmental issues, including the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Planning Service, Roads Service, Forest Service, Rivers Agency and Northern Ireland Water. We also work closely with District Councils.

We work closely with other UK and Republic of Ireland environmental, nature conservation and built heritage agencies environment agencies and enforcement bodies such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) to strengthen our enforcement activity.

We support central government policy making through the provision of advice on local environmental issues, policy development and statutory consultations on a wide range of issues including planning applications.

16 Your rights

16A Human rights

The Human Rights Act 1998 has made conditions of the European Convention on Human Rights part of UK law.

As a public authority, we must operate within that Act. If you believe that we have not done so you may follow our complaints procedure.

16B Equal opportunities

We are fully committed to promoting equal opportunities and good relations under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. We were involved in preparing the Department of the Environment's equality scheme to confirm our commitment and set out ways of meeting our obligations. You can see the scheme on the Department of the Environment website at www.doeni.gov.uk.

16C Disability discrimination

In line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, we aim to make sure that, wherever possible, access to our country parks and historic monuments is made as easy as possible for people with disabilities. If there is a particular way that we can help you or your group on a visit, please ask staff at the centre.

16D Privacy

We will respect your right to privacy and will observe the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Any personal data collected by NIEA will be used solely for the purpose stated, destroyed when that purpose is completed and will not be passed on to third parties without your permission (unless we have a duty to do so). We will provide details of any personal information we hold on you on receipt of your written request.

17 How to contact us

If you have any questions about this charter, contact:

Customer Co-ordinator
at Klondyke Building
phone: 028 9056 9213
e-mail: eamon.campbell@doeni.gov.uk

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

Information Management Section
at Klondyke Building (see below)
(also Data Protection Officer)
Phone: 028 9056 9271
e-mail: ian.minford@doeni.gov.uk

Our main headquarters is at:

Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Gasworks Business Park
Belfast
BT7 2JA
Phone: 0845 3020 008
Website: www.ni-environment.gov.uk

The units in Klondyke are listed below.

Unit	Head of Unit	Phone	E-mail
Biodiversity Unit	Michael Meharg	028 90569562	mike.meharg@doeni.gov.uk
Conservation Designations and Protection	Diane Stevenson	028 9056 9515	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 Herron	028 9056 9294	margaret.herron@doeni.gov.uk
Industrial Pollution and Radiochemical Inspectorate	David Bell	028 9056 9287	david.bell@doeni.gov.uk
Land and Resource Management	(Vacant) contact Pamela Patterson	028 9056 9381	pamela.patterson@doeni.gov.uk
Environmental Crime Unit	Anne Blacker	028 9056 9803	anne.blacker@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



Mark Hamblin

Our other two headquarters buildings and the Units in these are listed below.

Waterman House
5-33 Hill Street
Belfast
BT1 2LA.

Unit	Head of Unit	Phone	E-mail
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.okeeffe@doeni.gov.uk

Units in the Lisburn Office
Lisburn Office
17 Antrim Road
Lisburn
BT28 3AL.

Unit	Head of Unit	Phone	E-mail
Water Management Unit	(Vacant) contact Noreen McCleery	0289263 0249	noreen.mccleery@doeni.gov.uk

18 Addresses and phone numbers of our main country parks, monuments and centres

Bellaghy Bawn

Castle Street Bellaghy BT45 8LA Phone: 028 7938 6812

Carrickfergus Castle

Marine Highway Carrickfergus Co Antrim BT38 7BG Phone: 028 9336 5190

Castle Archdale Country Park

Castle Archdale Irvinestown Co Fermanagh BT94 1PP Phone: 028 6862 1588

Crawfordsburn Country Park

Bridge Road South Helens Bay Bangor Co Down BT19 1LD Phone: 028 9185 3621

Dunluce Castle

87 Dunluce Road Bushmills Co Antrim BT57 8UY Phone: 028 2073 1206

Peatlands Country Park

33 Derryhubbert Road Dungannon Co Tyrone BT71 6NW Phone: 028 3885 1102

Quoile Countryside Centre

5 Quay Road Downpatrick Co Down BT30 7JB Phone: 028 4461 5520

The Coastal Zone at Portrush

8 Bath Road Portrush Co Antrim BT56 8AP Phone: 028 7082 3600

Roe Valley Country Park

(also Ness and Ervey Wood Country Park) 41 Dogleap Road Limavady Co Londonderry BT49 9NN
Phone: 028 7772 2074

Scrabo Country Park

203A Scrabo Road Newtownards Co Down BT23 4SJ Phone: 028 9181 1491

Central Region Nature Reserves

c/o Peatlands Country Park 33 Derryhubbert Road Dungannon Co Tyrone BT71 6NW Phone: 028 3885 3930

North West Nature Reserves

Roe Valley Hospital 24 Benevenagh Drive Limavady Co Londonderry BT49 0AQ Phone: 028 7776 3982

South Eastern Region Nature Reserves

Quoile Countryside Centre 5 Quay Road Downpatrick Co Down BT30 7JB Phone: 028 4461 5520

Western Region Nature Reserves

Castle Archdale Country Park Irvinestown Co Fermanagh BT94 1PP
Phone: 028 6862 1588

Central Regional Office — c/o Peatlands Country Park Phone: 028 3885 3930

Central Area Office — c/o Peatlands Country Park Phone: 028 3885 1102

Northern Regional Office — Roe Valley Hospital Phone: 028 7776 3982

Northern Area Office — c/o Castle Archdale Country Park Phone: 028 6862 1588

South Eastern Regional Office — c/o Quoile Countryside Centre Phone: 028 4461 5520

South Eastern Area Office — c/o Peatlands Country Park Phone: 028 3885 1102

Western Regional Office — c/o Castle Archdale Country Park Phone: 028 6862 1588

Western Area Office — c/o Castle Archdale Country Park Phone: 028 6862 1588

NIEA Properties Management — c/o Klondyke Building Phone: 028 9056 9587

19 Further helpful information

Environmental Legislation and Service Standards —

available on our website at www.ni-environment.gov.uk or by phoning our Customer Co-ordinator on 028 9056 9213.

NIEA Complaints Procedure —

available on our website at 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 or by phoning Information Management on 028 9056 9722.

Department of Environment Publication Scheme —

available on the Department of Environment's website at 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
Phone: 028 9051 1270

Northern Ireland Environment Agency
Klondyke Building
Cromac Avenue
Gasworks Business Park
Belfast BT7 2JA
T. 0845 302 0008

www.ni-environment.gov.uk

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

