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OCO Customer Service Charter 2024 - 2026

December 2024



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Who we are

The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) is an independent human rights organisation established in 2004 under the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002. The Ombudsman for Children is appointed by the president and reports directly to the Oireachtas (Irish parliament). The Ombudsman for Children is Dr Niall Muldoon.

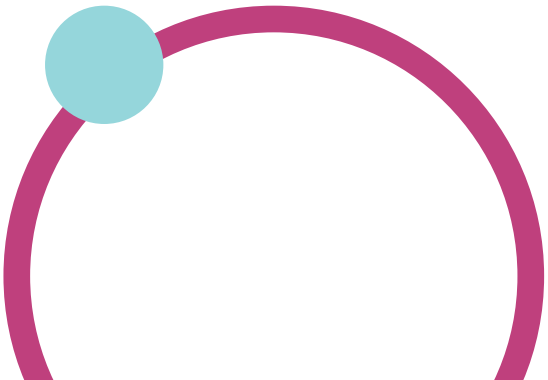
We have two main functions:

- to deal with complaints about children's services provided by public organisations; and
- to promote the rights and welfare of children and young people under 18 living in Ireland.

Our Vision and Values

Our Vision and Values reflect what we want to achieve for children.

We will use our powers and independent status to bring about an Ireland where society hears and respects all children and supports them so they are safe and fulfilled in their lives.



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The purpose of this Charter

This Customer Service Charter sets out the standard of service that customers can expect from the Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO). We outline in the Charter the processes and procedures we follow to help us achieve a high-quality customer service.

In line with good practice as set out in the Government publication *Customer Charter Initiative and Guidelines*, we are committed to working towards a continuous four-step cycle.

These four steps are:

1. Consultation with customers and other stakeholders
2. Commitment to service standards
3. Evaluation of performance
4. Reporting on results

Our Customer Charter outlines:

A. The standard of service you can expect when you contact us

B. How your feedback can help us to improve our service

C. Our customer complaints procedure

D. How to contact us

Please read on to find out more about each of these.

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A: The standard of service you can expect

Our commitment to customer service

The OCO commits to deliver services that are:

- accessible;
- of high quality; and
- focused to meet your needs in a timely manner.

We do this by following the Guiding Principles for Quality Customer Service.

Our commitment to accessibility

We will respect and accommodate diversity and ensure your right to equal treatment as much as possible by providing:

- accessible offices;
- child-friendly spaces and resources;
- translation and interpretation services;
- sign language.

We will provide information in plain English to make sure that we support and help disabled people as needed. We have an Accessibility Officer who you can contact with any requests or concerns about accessibility:

- oco@oco.ie

Visiting the office

If you have an appointment in our office, we will meet and greet you in a timely, courteous and fair way. We will make sure:

- a member of staff is available to meet you;
- our staff know where in the building your meeting is, so a staff member can bring you there; and
- the meeting area is suitable for its purpose.

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Written correspondence including email

If you write to us, we will:

- acknowledge all general enquiries within 5 working days;
- include a contact name and details when replying; and
- aim to answer your query promptly and in line with regulations.

If we cannot answer your query, we will explain why and tell you when you can expect a full reply.

Phone contact

If you call us, we will:

- answer your call or respond to a voice message as promptly as possible during working hours;
- give our name when we answer a call;
- always be courteous and professional;
- answer your query on the spot if we can.

If we can't answer your query, we'll take your details and call you back as soon as possible.

Our service through Irish

With regard to the Irish language, we will:

- make every effort to accommodate those who wish to deal with us through Irish;
- make sure that correspondence we receive in Irish will be answered in Irish;
- publish key documents, like our strategy statements and annual reports, in Irish and English; and
- work to meet our commitments under the Official Languages Act 2003.

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B: How your feedback can help us to improve our service

We welcome feedback about the quality of our service. We use your feedback to help us to improve our service, which, in turn, helps us to meet your needs.

You can contribute to this process by:

- sending us your comments or suggestions;
- telling us about the service you received, particularly if you believe that it didn't reach the standard you expect; and
- taking part in any customer survey we send you and by sharing your views with us.

C: Our customer complaints procedure

If you are not satisfied with the quality of our Customer Service, please first raise the matter with the person you are dealing with.

o Participation and Rights Education Team	**education@oco.ie**
o Policy Team	**policy@oco.ie**
o Communications Team	**communications@oco.ie**
o Corporate Services Team	**oco@oco.ie**
o Complaints and Investigations Team	**ococomplaint@oco.ie**

The team involved in the complaint will:

- acknowledge receiving your complaint within 5 working days;
- handle the complaint with the relevant senior staff member; and
- address your issue and contact you within 15 working days.

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Formal complaint

If this issue cannot be resolved to your satisfaction you can make a formal complaint to our Corporate Services Team by emailing oco@oco.ie.

When the Corporate Services Team receives the complaint, they will:

- acknowledge receiving your complaint within 5 working days; and
- try to deal with it within 20 working days.

If the issue relates to the Corporate Services Team, you can send your complaint to communications@oco.ie who will work to the same timeframes above.

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D: How to contact the OCO

By post:

Ombudsman for Children's Office
Millennium House
First Floor
52-56 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1
DO1 F5P8

By phone:

01 865 6800

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

By email:

oco@oco.ie

Ceisteanna as Gaeilge:
ombudsmandoleanai@oco.ie

Specific enquiries

For complaints relating to a public service only, you can email:

- ococomplaint@ oco.ie; or
- fill out an online form.

Complaints Freephone line: 1800 20 20 40

Phone lines are open Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm.

Other emails

Workshops	**education@oco.ie**
Media queries	**communications@ oco.ie**
Freedom of Information requests	**policy@oco.ie**
Data Protection queries and requests	policy@oco.ie
Accessibility queries	**oco@oco.ie**

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Further information and useful links

You may find the following information and links useful.

Useful link	URL
Our website	www.oco.ie
Making a complaint about another public service	www.oco.ie/online-complaint
Promoting the rights of children	www.oco.ie/childrens-rights
Our Vision and Values	www.oco.ie/about-us/our-vision-and-values