



Courts' Charter

Making a Complaint about the Northern Ireland Court Service

serving
the community
through the
administration
of justice

www.courtsni.gov.uk

Making a complaint about the Northern Ireland Court Service

The Northern Ireland Court Service is committed to improving its quality of service to all court users. By making comments about our services, you enable us to improve them. By making a complaint, you enable us to put things right.

Talk to our staff

We welcome complaints about any aspect of our services that you do not think is acceptable. You can also complain about our facilities in courthouses if you don't think they are up to standard. The minimum standard of service that you can expect is outlined further in Courts' Charter leaflet. You can get copies of all Courts' Charter leaflets at courthouse information points.

This is a general leaflet about the complaints procedure. If you need more information please contact the office involved.

Tell us your experiences

Please tell staff about any way in which our services can be improved. Our staff are dedicated to improving customer satisfaction and will welcome your opinions.

You can also fill out a comment card. Comment cards are a way of telling us, in your opinion, how good or bad you think our service is. The cards are available at information points and waiting areas in all court offices.

When do our procedures not apply?

The Court Service does not have the authority to deal with all types of complaints.

You cannot use this procedure to complain about a judicial decision, even if you think that a judge or magistrate has made the wrong decision. In these circumstances, you should get legal advice as soon as possible.

If you have a complaint about a solicitor or an official from other departments and agencies, you should contact their organisation.

How to make a complaint:

Step one:

If you are not happy with our services talk to an appropriate member of staff.

- They will try and sort out the problem then and there.
- If that is not possible they will log your complaint and you will receive a response within 15 days.

Step two:

- If you are still not happy with the handling of your complaint, you can ask to speak to the Senior Manager responsible for the court office.
- Alternatively you can write a letter, telephone or send an e-mail to the Senior Manager of the court office.

When making a complaint:

- Provide your name and address.
- Say clearly what you are complaining about.
- Give as much detail as possible about the complaint, including dates, particular events and names of staff you spoke to at the time.

The Manager will respond to your complaint within 15 days.

You can obtain contact details from any courthouse reception desk or the relevant Courts' Charter leaflet.

Step three:

If you still feel that your complaint has not been adequately dealt with, you can:

- Call in to the Information Centre between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday and ask to speak to the Manager.
- You can also contact us by phone, fax or e-mail.
- Depending on the nature/complexity of the complaint, you may be asked to put your complaint in writing.

For contact details see the back of this leaflet.

Step four:

If you are not happy with how The Court Service has handled your complaint, you can ask a Member of Parliament to write to the Ombudsman for you.

- The Parliamentary Ombudsman is independent of government and is not a civil servant.
- For contact details see the back of this leaflet

Complaints are confidential. We will ensure that if you complain, you will not be treated differently because of it.

Useful contact details:

If you feel your complaint has not been adequately dealt with or if you need more information in relation to any aspect of our service, you can contact:

The Information Centre
Windsor House
9-15 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7LT

Call into the information centre between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday

Phone the centre on 028 9032 8594

Send us a fax at any time on 028 9041 2390

Website: www.courtsni.gov.uk

E-mail: informationcentre@courtsni.gov.uk

If you need more information regarding the Parliamentary Ombudsman, you can contact:

The Office of the Parliamentary
Commissioner for Administration
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QP

Telephone: 0845 015 4033

Fax: 020 7217 4295 or 020 7217 4160

Website: <http://www.ombudsman.org.uk>

E-mail: opca-enqu@ombudsman.org

If you have a complaint about a Barrister, you can get more information by writing to:

The General Council of the Bar
The Bar Library
91 Chichester Street
Belfast
BT1 3JQ

Telephone: 028 90562350

Fax: 028 90562350

If you have a complaint about a solicitor, you can get more information by writing to:

The Northern Ireland Law Society
Law Society house
98 Victoria Street
Belfast
BT1 3JZ

Telephone: 028 90231614

Fax: 028 90232606

If you have a complaint about the way the Judge behaved towards you (not the way they handled the case or that the decision went against you), you should complain in writing to:

The Private Office
Northern Ireland Court Service
Windsor House
9-15 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7LT

If you have a complaint relating to judicial appointments, write to:

The Commissioner for Judicial
Appointments Northern Ireland
Headline Building
10 – 14 Victoria Street
Belfast
BT1 3GG

If you would like independent advice in relation to making a complaint, you can receive information from:

www.citizenadvice.co.uk

Alternatively, you can consult the telephone directory for the contact details of your local branch.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We can provide this booklet in a wide range of alternative formats. Please ask:

**Information Centre
Northern Ireland Court Service**

Windsor House

9-15 Bedford Street

Belfast BT2 7LT.

Phone: 028 9032 8594

Fax: 028 9041 2390

www.courtsni.gov.uk

email: informationcentre@courtsni.gov.uk