

# Tribunals Customer Service Questionnaire 2011

*serving the community through the administration of justice*

## Document Details

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## Questionnaire results

### Section 1: About the respondent

- The Tribunals that dealt with the highest number of respondents' cases were the Mental Health Review Tribunal (17%), the Social Security Commissioner (17%) and the Appeals Service and Office of the President of the Appeals Tribunal (16%). (Note that respondents could choose more than one option).
- The majority of survey respondents were the applicant/appellant/appointee (46%).

### Section 2: Finding out about Tribunals

- The majority of respondents (74%) found obtaining information about the Tribunals appeals process easy and the Tribunals Office was the most common method of obtaining advice on the Tribunals procedure with 33% of respondents choosing this method (respondents could choose more than one option).
- 39% of respondents said they were unaware of the appeal process length but the majority (65%) found the process of making the appeal application straightforward.

### Section 3: Information and Assistance

- The Tribunal Leaflet was the most popular method of obtaining information with 31% of respondents using this method (respondents could choose more than one option).
- 85% of respondents found that the information they received met their needs and 79% found the information easy to understand.
- 73% of respondents contacted Tribunal office staff, with the majority of these using the telephone as the form of contact (89%).
- With regards to respondents who contacted Tribunal office staff by telephone, 85% of calls were answered within 30 seconds, 77% of those respondents who sent letters/emails to Tribunal staff received a reply within 15 days and 80% of respondents who contacted Tribunal office staff in person were seen at the counter within 10 minutes.
- 88% of respondents who contacted Tribunal office staff found them to be polite and 91% said they were helpful.

## **Section 4: The Hearing**

- The average waiting time for respondents until the 1st Appeal hearing date was 16 weeks, with 50% of respondents thinking this length of time was reasonable.
- For the majority of respondents who specified the length of advance notice they were given when the appeal was given a date for hearing (70%), the length of notice was more than 2 weeks.
- 91% of respondents felt they were given enough notice.
- 78% of respondents asked for an oral hearing. 88% of this proportion attended a hearing.
- For those respondents who attended a hearing, the most common venue was Bedford House Hearing Centre with 31% of respondents attending a hearing there.
- The furthest a respondent travelled to attend a hearing was 86 miles (from Enniskillen to Belfast) and the majority of respondents (77%) felt that the facilities at the hearing venue met their needs.
- 61% of respondents said that the appeal hearing started on time. For those respondents whose appeal hearing did not start on time, 60% of respondents were given a reason for the delay.
- 78% of respondents' appeals were dealt with at the first hearing.
- 98% of respondents said it was clearly explained who everyone was and what their role was before the hearing, with 65% feeling it was easy to understand what was happening during the hearing.

## **Section 5: Decisions/Outcomes**

- 82% of respondents felt that the time taken for the Tribunal to let them know their decision was reasonable, with 88% saying they understood the decision.
- 71% of respondents said they were made aware of additional steps or actions they could take and 79% felt these steps or actions were clearly explained to them.

## **Section 6: Overall Experience**

- 62% of respondents had, taking everything into account, a positive overall impression of the Tribunal process.

**Notes:**

- The number of respondents is small in relation to some questions and results should be viewed in this context
- The total number of respondents in each question refers to the total number of valid responses
- The survey was issued on 27th/28th January 2011 and closed on 18th February 2011
- A total of 320 surveys were issued
- The survey had a 20% response rate

## Section 1: About the respondent

Q1 – Please specify the Tribunal that dealt with your case/s?<sup>1</sup>

	Frequency	Percent
Child Support Commissioner	2	2.7
Criminal Injuries Appeals Panel	11	14.7
Lands Tribunals	4	5.3
Mental Health Review Tribunal	13	17.3
Northern Ireland Valuation Tribunal	2	2.7
Pensions Appeal Tribunal	10	13.3
Social Security Commissioner	13	17.3
Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal	4	5.3
Traffic Penalty Tribunal	4	5.3
The Appeals Service and Office of the President of the Appeals Tribunal	12	16.0
Health and Safety Tribunal	0	0
Charities Tribunal	0	0
Schedule 11 Tribunal	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Q2 – Are you the...?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not stated	3	4.8	4.8	4.8
	Applicant/Appellant/Appointee	29	46.0	46.0	50.8
	Family/Friend	2	3.2	3.2	54.0
	Legal Profession Professional witness	14	22.2	22.2	76.2
	Other	3	4.8	4.8	81.0
	Representative e.g. CAB, VS etc	12	19.0	19.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Multiple response question N=63

**Q2 - If other, please specify:**

Barrister
elected representative
judicial shadowing
medical
Solicitor
student social worker observer
Union representative
Valuer
Victim support NI

## Section 2: Finding out about tribunals

**Q3 – In terms of finding out about Tribunal appeals, how did you find obtaining information about the appeal process?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Very Easy)	15	23.8	27.8	27.8
	2	12	19.0	22.2	50.0
	3	13	20.6	24.1	74.1
	4	7	11.1	13.0	87.0
	5	5	7.9	9.3	96.3
	6 (Very Difficult)	2	3.2	3.7	100.0
	Total	54	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	9	14.3		
Total		63	100.0		

**Q4 – Who advised you about the Tribunal procedure?<sup>2</sup>**

	Frequency	Percent
The department whose decision is being appealed	15	26.3
The Tribunals Office	19	33.3
Local Courts Office	0	0.0
Advisory Body	7	12.3
Other	16	28.1
Total	57	100.0

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<sup>2</sup> Multiple response question N=63

**Q4 - If other, please specify:**

friend (CAB)
I am a representative
Medical team
my colleague
Nobody
Primary Nurse
psychiatric ward staff
Royal British Legion
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Sinn Fein
Solicitor
union rep
Usually experience and web site

**Q5 – Were you aware of the likely length of time the appeal process would take?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	22	38.6	38.6	38.6
Yes	35	61.4	61.4	100.0
Total	57	100.0	100.0	

**Q5a - If YES, where did you obtain the information from?**

Appeals service
CAB
CICAPNI
Doctor and staff
education board
experience
from the Department
I do appeals all the time so am well aware of length of time it takes
In the letter
my solicitor
not sure
On a letter which was sent out
online
Previous experience
Primary Nurse
psychiatric ward staff
RBL
Royal British Legion
solicitor
solicitors and doctor
The Appeals Service (I have regular contact)
Tribunal Secretariat
Tribunals Office
union rep
was there before

**Q6 – Making the appeal application was...**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Very straightforward)	15	23.8	29.4	29.4
	2	14	22.2	27.5	56.9
	3	4	6.3	7.8	64.7
	4	9	14.3	17.6	82.4
	5	5	7.9	9.8	92.2
	6 (Very complicated)	4	6.3	7.8	100.0
	Total	51	81.0	100.0	
Missing	System	12	19.0		
Total		63	100.0		

### Section 3: Information and Assistance

Q7 – Please indicate where you obtained the information from<sup>3</sup>:

	Frequency	Percent
Tribunal Leaflet	22	30.6
Staff in the Tribunal Office	11	15.3
Website	7	9.7
Representative	13	18.1
Other	19	26.4
Total	72	100.0

Q7 - If Representative, please specify:

CAB
I am the representative
Not known
RAFA
SEFF
Solicitor

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<sup>3</sup> Multiple response question N=63

**Q7 - If other, please specify:**

CAB
DSD website
experience
from experience
guesswork
Law courts
NI CAB training
other solicitor
parking ticket
RBL
Road Traffic
SENAC
Sinn Fein
Solicitor (s)
solicitor and doctor
union rep

**Q8 – The information was useful/not useful and...**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Met my needs)	23	36.5	44.2	44.2
	2	13	20.6	25.0	69.2
	3	8	12.7	15.4	84.6
	4	4	6.3	7.7	92.3
	5	2	3.2	3.8	96.2
	6 (did not meet my needs)	2	3.2	3.8	100.0
	Total	52	82.5	100.0	
Missing	System	11	17.5		
Total		63	100.0		

**Q9 – I found the information ...**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Easy to understand)	19	30.2	35.8	35.8
	2	11	17.5	20.8	56.6
	3	12	19.0	22.6	79.2
	4	4	6.3	7.5	86.8
	5	5	7.9	9.4	96.2
	6 (Very complicated)	2	3.2	3.8	100.0
	Total	53	84.1	100.0	
Missing	System	10	15.9		
Total		63	100.0		

**Q10 – Did you contact staff in the Tribunal office at any stage?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	16	26.7	26.7	26.7
Yes	44	73.3	73.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**Q11 – How did you contact Tribunal staff?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Email	1	2.3	2.3	2.3
In person	1	2.3	2.3	4.5
Letter	3	6.8	6.8	11.4
Telephone	39	88.6	88.6	100.0
Total	44	100.0	100.0	

### Q12 – How was their response?

Q12 - telephone rate of response – was your call answered within 30 seconds?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
Yes	34	85.0	85.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Q12 - letter/email rate of response – did you receive a reply within 15 days?<sup>4</sup>

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	23.3	23.3	23.3
Yes	23	76.7	76.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Q12 - in person rate of response – were you seen at the counter within 10 minutes?<sup>5</sup>

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	20.0	20.0	20.0
Yes	8	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

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<sup>4</sup> This may include persons who were notified by staff.

<sup>5</sup> This may include correspondence with tribunals.

**Q13 – How polite were Tribunal staff?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Very polite)	26	59.1	60.5	60.5
	2	9	20.5	20.9	81.4
	3	3	6.8	7.0	88.4
	4	1	2.3	2.3	90.7
	5	3	6.8	7.0	97.7
	6 (Not polite)	1	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	43	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.3		
Total		44	100.0		

**Q14 – How helpful were Tribunal staff?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Very helpful)	23	52.3	53.5	53.5
	2	9	20.5	20.9	74.4
	3	7	15.9	16.3	90.7
	4	2	4.5	4.7	95.3
	5	0	4.5	4.7	95.3
	6 (Not very helpful)	2	4.5	4.7	100.0
	Total	43	97.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.3		
Total		44	100.0		

## Section 4: The Hearing

**Q15 – How long did you have to wait for the 1<sup>st</sup> Appeal hearing date?**

	Number of cases	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Waiting time (weeks)	35	3.00	61.00	16.2571

**Q16 – Do you think this length of time was...**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Reasonable)	9	14.3	18.0	18.0
	2	8	12.7	16.0	34.0
	3	8	12.7	16.0	50.0
	4	4	6.3	8.0	58.0
	5	10	15.9	20.0	78.0
	6 (Unreasonable)	11	17.5	22.0	100.0
	Total	50	79.4	100.0	
Missing	System	13	20.6		
Total		63	100.0		

**Q17 – When the appeal was given a date for hearing how much advance notice were you given?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not specified	9	14.3	14.3	14.3
1 - 2 weeks	15	23.8	23.8	38.1
Greater than 2 weeks	4	6.3	6.3	44.4
Greater than 2 weeks	34	54.0	54.0	98.4
Less than 1 week	1	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	63	100.0	100.0	

**Q18 – Was this enough notice?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	5	9.4	9.4	9.4
Yes	48	90.6	90.6	100.0
Total	53	100.0	100.0	

**Q19 – Did you ask for an oral hearing?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	11	21.6	21.6	21.6
Yes	40	78.4	78.4	100.0
Total	51	100.0	100.0	

**Q19 – If no, how was the appeal dealt with?**

Consultant informed
I had sent a letter of appeal
Insufficient evidence from me. 2nd appeal hearing - attended myself
letter
public hearing
satisfactorily
waiting on 14th Feb
we were given an oral hearing

**Q20 – Did you attend a hearing?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	12.5	12.5	12.5
Yes	49	87.5	87.5	100.0
Total	56	100.0	100.0	

**Q21 – Where did the hearing take place?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not specified	2	4.1	4.1	4.1
Bedford House Hearing Centre	15	30.6	30.6	34.7
Other Venue	32	65.3	65.3	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

**Q21 – If other venue, please state where:**

Armagh
Armagh Business Centre
Board room
Both Bedford House and other venue
Cleaver House
Cleaver House. Banbridge, Lurgan
cookstown enterprise centre
Corn Exchange
Dungannon Enterprise Centre
Downshire Hospital
Dungannon/Cookstown Enterprise Centres
Dungannon/Craigavon
Enniskillen
HHSSD Ballymena
Holywell Hospital
Knockbracken
Lands Tribunal RCJ
Newtownards
not known
RCJ
St Lukes Hospital Armagh
various centres, Dungannon, Cookstown, Magherafelt
Various venues

**Q22 – What journey did you make to attend the hearing?**

1 mile
Armagh to Armagh (0.75 mile)
Armagh to Armagh (1 mile)
Ballycastle to Ballymena (26 miles)
Ballymena to Belfast (40 miles)
Banbridge to Belfast (25 miles)
Banbridge to Lurgan
Belfast to Belfast
Belfast to Belfast (2 miles)
Belfast to Belfast (4 miles)
Belfast to Knockbracken (5 miles)
Belfast to North Belfast (3 miles)
Carrickfergus to Belfast (11 miles)
Coalisland to Dungannon (5 miles)
Coalisland to Dungannon/Cookstown (5 to 10 miles)
Comber to Belfast (10 miles)
Cookstown to Cookstown (1 mile)
Downpatrick to Downpatrick
Dundonald to Newtownards (7 miles)
Dungannon to Belfast (45 miles)
East Belfast to Belfast City Centre (2 miles)
Enniskillen to Belfast (86 miles)
Fermanagh to (80 miles)
Home to Hearing (2 miles)
Limavady to Antrim (40 miles)
Londonderry to Belfast (80 miles)
Maghera to Dungannon?Craigavon
Markethill to Armagh (7 miles)
Newry to Belfast (45 miles)
Newtownabbey to Belfast (10 miles)
Newtownabbey to Belfast (6 miles)
Newtownabbey to Belfast (7 miles)
Newtownabbey to Belfast (8 miles)
Portglenone to Belfast (42 miles)

Richhill to Armagh (6 miles)
varies
West Belfast to Belfast (3.5 miles)

**Q23 – The facilities at the hearing venue...**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Met needs)	17	34.7	38.6	38.6
	2	11	22.4	25.0	63.6
	3	6	12.2	13.6	77.3
	4	4	8.2	9.1	86.4
	5	3	6.1	6.8	93.2
	6 (Did not meet needs)	3	6.1	6.8	100.0
	Total	44	89.8	100.0	
Missing	System	5	10.2		
Total		49	100.0		

**Q24 – Did the appeal hearing start on time?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	17	38.6	38.6	38.6
Yes	27	61.4	61.4	100.0
Total	44	100.0	100.0	

**Q24 – If not, how long did you have to wait?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not specified	6	35.3	35.3	35.3
20 mns	1	5.9	5.9	41.2
3 hours	1	5.9	5.9	47.1
30 min	2	11.8	11.8	58.8
30 mins	3	17.6	17.6	76.5
35 mins	1	5.9	5.9	82.4
45 minutes	1	5.9	5.9	88.2
normally hearing do not start on time	1	5.9	5.9	94.1
over 20 mins	1	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	17	100.0	100.0	

**Q24 – Were you given a reason for the delay?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	6	40.0	40.0	40.0
Yes	9	60.0	60.0	100.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0	

**Q25 – Was the appeal dealt with at the first hearing?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	9	22.5	22.5	22.5
Yes	31	77.5	77.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

**Q25 – If not, how many times was the appeal adjourned?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not specified	41	83.7	83.7	83.7
1	4	8.2	8.2	91.8
2	2	4.1	4.1	95.9
2-3 times	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
varies	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	49	100.0	100.0	

**Q26 – Before the hearing was it clearly explained who everyone was and what their role was?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Yes	47	97.9	97.9	100.0
Total	48	100.0	100.0	

**Q27 – During the hearing was it easy to understand what was happening?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	16	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Yes	30	65.2	65.2	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

## Section 5: Decisions/Outcomes

Q28 – The time taken for the Tribunal to let me know their Decision was...

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Reasonable)	26	41.3	46.4	46.4
	2	9	14.3	16.1	62.5
	3	11	17.5	19.6	82.1
	4	3	4.8	5.4	87.5
	5	1	1.6	1.8	89.3
	6 (Unreasonable)	6	9.5	10.7	100.0
	Total	56	88.9	100.0	
Missing	System	7	11.1		
Total		63	100.0		

Q29 – Did you understand the Decision?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	12.5	12.5	12.5
Yes	49	87.5	87.5	100.0
Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Q30 – When you received the Decision, were you made aware of any additional steps or actions you could take?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	16	28.6	28.6	28.6
Yes	40	71.4	71.4	100.0
Total	56	100.0	100.0	

**Q31 – How clear were these steps or actions explained to you?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Absolutely clear)	22	34.9	52.4	52.4
	2	8	12.7	19.0	71.4
	3	3	4.8	7.1	78.6
	4	3	4.8	7.1	85.7
	5	1	1.6	2.4	88.1
	6 (Not clear at all)	5	7.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	42	66.7	100.0	
Missing	System	21	33.3		
Total		63	100.0		

## Section 6: Overall Experience

Q32 – Taking everything into account, what was your overall impression of the Tribunal process?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 (Positive)	17	27.0	29.3	29.3
	2	15	23.8	25.9	55.2
	3	4	6.3	6.9	62.1
	4	13	20.6	22.4	84.5
	5	2	3.2	3.4	87.9
	6 (Negative)	7	11.1	12.1	100.0
	Total	58	92.1	100.0	
Missing	System	5	7.9		
Total		63	100.0		

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