

Supreme Court  
Taxing Office



# Supreme Court Taxing Office Charter

serving  
the community  
through the  
administration  
of justice

Northern Ireland Court Service  
[www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk)



We can provide this booklet in a wide range of alternative formats - please contact the Information Centre at:

**Northern Ireland Court Service**

Information Centre  
Windsor House  
Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7LT

Telephone 028 9032 8594  
Facsimile 028 9041 2390  
Textphone 028 9041 2920  
Email [informationcentre@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:informationcentre@courtsni.gov.uk)  
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# SUPREME COURT TAXING OFFICE CHARTER

## Introduction

The Supreme Court Taxing Office (Taxing Office) is part of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Northern Ireland. Its role is to provide administrative support to the Supreme Court Taxing Master (Taxing Master) in the assessment (or taxing) of bills of costs for

- Court of Appeal Civil business
- Criminal Appeal business
- Crown Court & Magistrates Court Criminal business
- Bills of Costs for members of the public who are in disputes with their solicitor regarding the amount of their legal bill

The Taxing Office address is 7th Floor, Bedford House, 16-22 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FD. The office can be contacted by telephoning (028) 90245081 and asking to be connected to the office.

This Charter is for people who come into contact with the Taxing Office. It sets out the standards by which they will be treated during the taxation process.

## Objectives and Values

Our Mission Statement is, "To take appropriate and prompt action in relation to all taxation cases lodged." The Taxing Office will process your business, impartially and fairly, and as far as possible be flexible in meeting your needs. Our key values are to demonstrate respect for people and apply fairness in all we do. The standards of behaviour for our staff are set out in our Mission, Vision and Values statement.

## Services Provided by the Taxing Office

The following are the main services provided by the Taxing Office

- Case Lodgement Process
- Issue Taxation Assessments
- Issue Taxation Certificates
- Facilitate Taxation Hearings before the Taxing Master
- Publish Practice Directions made by the Taxing Master
- Publish Judgments issued by the Taxing Master

## Accountability

Administrative responsibility for the Taxing Office lies with the Northern Ireland Court Service. All administrative staff are bound by service standards set down by the Northern Ireland Court Service and the levels of service you can expect are set out below. We will meet regularly with customers to review operating issues and performance including service modernisation and business relationships.

We monitor our performance and publish targets and achievements on our web pages and on notice boards in our public waiting areas. The EJO web pages can be found on the Court Service website:- [www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk).

We are also subject to periodic inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Courts Administration (HMICA). These inspection reports are published and available from several sources including the Taxing Office.

## General Standards of Service

All Taxing Office customers can expect the following standards of service

- The office will be open from 9.30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday (excluding Bank and Public Holidays);
- Our public waiting areas will be clean and comfortable with access to toilet facilities;
- Directions and signs to our various offices will be clearly displayed;
- If you wish, your enquiry may be dealt with in a private area;
- You will be dealt with by knowledgeable, courteous, professional staff;
- On most occasions you will be dealt with immediately, however if you have not been spoken to by the appropriate person within 10 minutes of your arrival, a full explanation will be provided;
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to provide appropriate access, information and facilities for disabled customers. Our Disability Liaison Officer should be contacted to facilitate people with sight, hearing, language or physical impairments. We will give you information about the facilities available for disabled people and make alternative arrangements if required. A separate leaflet "Information for Disabled Customers" is also available. To obtain a copy of this leaflet, ask a member of Court Service staff or contact the Information Centre at the address on the back of this publication;
- For those customers whose first language is not English a translation service will be provided upon request;
- If you contact the Office by telephone, your call will be answered within 30 seconds;
- If you contact the Office by letter or e-mail you will receive a reply within 20 working days;
- A fee payment facility for the payment of taxation fees;
- Receipts for all fee payments;
- To lodge and allocate a case number to every case lodged in the office within 25 working days of lodgement;
- To issue taxation assessments within 20 working days from being assessed by the Taxing Master;
- To facilitate taxation hearings before the Taxing Master;
- To issue taxation certificates provided all vouching and fee payments have been completed;
- To provide short term storage for papers if required for taxation hearing; see Practice Direction 2 of

- 2006 issued by the Taxing Master
- To provide a service for the collection of papers at a public counter during office hours

### **Availability of On-line Support, Advice & Guidance**

To improve the accessibility of customer information about the Taxing Office the following services will be provided on the Northern Ireland Courts Service website, [www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk):

- All Practice Directions issued by the Taxing Master
- All public judgments issued by the Taxing Master
- Best Practice Guides & Precedent Bills and Forms
- Office Targets and Performance Achievements
- Links to relevant organisations (e.g. Legal Services Commission; Law Society of Northern Ireland)

**Meeting Your Needs**

We are committed to ensuring that, so far as reasonably possible, all your needs are met including making case information available, and being able to ensure you can discuss any confidential business in private.

We shall ensure this Charter and any other information referred in it can be made available in a range of formats. If you require information produced in a format that meets your particular needs you should contact the

Northern Ireland Court Service  
Information Centre  
Windsor House  
9-15 Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7LT  
Tel 028 9032 8594

Or e-mail them at  
[informationcentre@courtsni.gov.uk](mailto:informationcentre@courtsni.gov.uk)

**Making a Complaint.**

We are committed to improving the quality of our services. By making comments about our services, you can enable us to improve them. By making a complaint, you enable us to put things right.

If you have a complaint or comment about the service, or the way in which you were treated, it should be addressed in the first instance to the

Business Manager  
Supreme Court Taxing Office  
7th floor  
Bedford House  
16-22 Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7DS

A separate leaflet 'Making a Complaint about the Northern Ireland Court Service' provides information on how to make a complaint and is available from any court venue, including:

The Supreme Court Taxing Office  
7th floor  
Bedford House  
16-22 Bedford Street  
Belfast BT2 7DS, or

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

It is also available on the Court Service's website, [www.courtsni.gov.uk](http://www.courtsni.gov.uk)

If however, your complaint is about the conduct of the Taxing Master, it should be addressed in writing to:

The Lord Chief Justice's Office  
Royal Courts of Justice  
Chichester Street,  
Belfast BT1 3JF

Further information on making a complaint about a member of the judiciary is available from the Court Service's Information Centre, on its website or from the Lord Chief Justice's Office.

If your complaint is about the legal decision made by the Taxing Master, you should seek legal advice.

## **Review**

We manage our business and our business relationships under the framework of the EFQM business model; this provides the basis for business improvement. Information regarding EFQM and how EJO implements this framework can be found on our web pages. Under this framework, the standards contained in this Charter will be reviewed annually to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of people coming into contact with the Supreme Court Taxing Office. An important part of the process will be to seek their views and comments and to actively address any concerns they may have.







For further information on the work of the Northern Ireland Court Service please contact

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