Customer Service
Action Plan

2003 - 2004
Contents

- Foreword by Secretary General
- Principles of Quality Customer Service - 12 Quality Customer Service Principles
- Mission Statement and List of Customers
- Appendix I – Internal Consultation
- Appendix II – Principal Contact Points
- Appendix III - External Consultation - Details of Organisations consulted and methods used
Foreword by the Secretary General

I am pleased to welcome the Department’s Customer Service Action Plan 2003-2004, which was prepared in association with the Partnership Committee. The Plan is based on the Twelve Quality Customer Service Principles set out in the Government’s Quality Customer Service Initiative and outlines the actions which will be taken to give effect to these Principles.

This Plan is part of our ongoing programme of development in relation to Quality Customer Service and is an integral part of the Department’s business planning process. The aim is to ensure that the objectives of Quality Customer Service are at the core of everything we do.

Consultation with our customers, both internal and external, is a key element in the identification of areas for improvement. In the development of this plan both front-line staff and external customers were consulted. The health boards and a range of health agencies were surveyed. Formal procedures for handling customer complaints are being introduced to support our Quality Customer Service Initiative in 2003. This Initiative will not only provide customers with mechanisms to seek redress but will also help highlight any deficiencies in our systems and procedures, which will be addressed to the mutual benefit of customers and the Department.

In 2003, there will be more concentrated efforts to improve facilities on our Website and generally develop E-business. There are plans to provide Internet Services through the Public Services Broker (Reach) allow birth, death and marriage certificates to be ordered by customers on line from the General Register Office. Work on modernising the Civil Registration Programme will be continued in conjunction with the Department of Social and Family Affairs.
There is an increasing awareness of the importance of providing a quality customer service to our internal customers. Internal customer service is about the duty of care we owe to our colleagues. Internal customer service impacts very heavily on the quality of the service we deliver to our external customers and therefore involves everyone. Partnership has been very fruitful in developing ideas on internal customer service. Providing an effective level of customer service to internal customers leads to better communication and a better delivery of service. I would like to thank the sub-group of Partnership for their work on this and on the Customer Service Action Plan overall.

The success of what is achieved in implementing this plan will be measured through feedback from our customers. This feedback will be used to build on progress made and will help us to explore innovative ways to measure our service delivery. Partnership, and especially the sub group will play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the Customer Service Action Plan. We will report on progress in implementing the Plan in our Annual Report.

The next step for all Government Departments is to work towards a Departmental Customer Service Charter as part of a four stage Quality Cycle. The Taoiseach has recently set out the stages of the cycle as:

- Consultation with customers and front line staff
- Committing publicly to clear performance standards
- Measurement and evaluation of performance against these standards
- Reporting these results publicly

Guidelines on the development of Departmental Customer Services Charters are being prepared by the QCS Working Group on which this Department is represented. The Customer Service Charter will be developed this year and I look forward to working in partnership with both colleagues and customers in its development.

I am proud of the professionalism and expertise of the staff of the Department and the quality of the service provided by the Department. Now we have to press ahead with the
implementation of this plan and the furthering of quality customer service as a core principle in everything we do. To assist staff, the Department will continue to consult in relation to QCS issues and will ensure that staff receive appropriate levels of training and support. I look forward to the Department maintaining and improving the level of customer service already achieved to ensure continuing improvements in the quality of services delivered.

Michael Kelly
Secretary General
February 2003
Principles of Quality Customer Service

One of the fundamental themes of Delivering Better Government (1996) is the “achievement of an excellent service for the Government and for the public as customers and clients at all levels”. In 2000, the Quality Customer Service (QCS) Working Group reviewed and revised the 1997 Principles of Quality Customer Service to take account of changes in the environment since 1997, such as the equality agenda. In July 2000, the Government decided that:

- The revised 12 QCS principles be adopted by the Civil Service;
- Departments/Offices proceed to update, refine and publish their Customer Service Action Plans (CSAPs) by the first quarter of 2001 to give full effect to these revised principles and to ensure continuous quality improvement;
- Departments/Offices ensure that the revised principles are firmly embedded in their Strategy Statements and Business Plans;
- Departments/Offices report on progress on the goals and objectives of their CSAPs in their Annual Reports;
- The QCS principles be extended by each Department/Office to include any public service organisation, agency or body for which it has responsibility.
The 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service
For Customers and Clients of the Public Service

In their dealings with the public, Civil Service Departments and Public Service offices will:

1. Quality Service Standards
Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

2. Equality/Diversity
Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community). Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

3. Physical Access
Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

4. Information
Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication. Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.
5. **Timeliness and Courtesy**
Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.
Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

6. **Complaints**
Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

7. **Appeals**
Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

8. **Consultation and Evaluation**
Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

9. **Choice**
Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

10. **Official Languages Equality**
Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

11. **Better Co-ordination**
Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.
12. Internal Customer

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.
Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Health and Children is:
“To support, protect and empower individuals, families and their communities to achieve their full health potential by putting health at the centre of public policy and by leading the development of high quality, equitable and efficient health and personal social services.”

Who are our customers?

- General Public which includes members of the public who may or may not have ever contacted the Department of Health and Children but who have an interest in knowing that if they ever need to they will be treated in a fair and equitable manner. This group also includes members of the media, teachers and school children
- Public Representatives and members of the Oireachtas
- Other public servants and officials of International Organisations: - Staff of other Government Departments, Health Boards, Voluntary Hospitals, Voluntary Sector Organisations, Other Health Agencies, Trade Unions, Officials of the European Union, Officials of International Organisations
- Special Interest Groups: groups representing a specific health interest
- Internal Staff are customers of each other and it is important that the internal customer is acknowledged (See Principle 12)
Principles of Quality Customer Service

The following sets out actions, target dates, objectives and performance indicators for implementing each of the Principles of Quality Customer Service.

1. Quality Service Standards

Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service to be identified as a core competency for all DoHC staff participating in PMDS*</td>
<td>End 2003</td>
<td>Staff to become aware of the 12 principles of QCS and the role we all play in QCS for the Department</td>
<td>Improved QCS measured by survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress on QCS** will be provided in Departmental Annual Reports</td>
<td>April 2003</td>
<td>Evaluate and report on our progress on an ongoing basis</td>
<td>Progress on QCS reported on in Annual Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCS and Induction training courses to include awareness of 12 Principles</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Raise awareness and understanding of 12 Principles</td>
<td>Talk on QCS by member of QCS team included in Induction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSAP*** finalised circulated to all staff and made available on website</td>
<td>January 2003</td>
<td>Reiterating the importance of QCS and circulating action plan for the 12 Principles</td>
<td>CSAP circulated and available on website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* – Performance Management Development System  
** – Quality Customer Service  
*** – Customer Service Action Plan

The following has been achieved to date on quality customer standards:-

- Guidelines on Customer Service have been issued to all staff
- QCS principles and standards of service delivery are displayed in all reception areas
2. Equality/Diversity

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GRO Modernisation Civil Registration Programme</td>
<td>As per Programme</td>
<td>Help meet geographic boundaries to service aspect of Equality</td>
<td>Increased ease in obtaining certificates, able to purchase certificates online, less personal callers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include Equality/Diversity awareness in modules of relevant training courses</td>
<td>June 2003</td>
<td>Increase awareness of Equality/Diversity</td>
<td>Training modules developed and available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to promote the availability of family friendly schemes for all staff</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Equal access to family friendly schemes irrespective of gender, marital status etc.</td>
<td>Participation on family friendly schemes at all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas for priority action as per Equality &amp; Diversity Policy</td>
<td>As per Policy</td>
<td>To meet requirements of recent legislation</td>
<td>Target dates met as per policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on Equality/Diversity:-

- Participation in pilot equality/diversity schemes run by the Civil Service Commission and Local Appointments Commission
- Departmental staff who are fluent and willing to provide a service through different languages have been identified
3. Physical Access

Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure physical access to all our public offices especially for those with special needs</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ensure access for all</td>
<td>Increased accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical access has to be a priority when sourcing new headquarters</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ensure ease of access for all</td>
<td>Easy access to new headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of induction loop to benefit Hearing Aid users</td>
<td></td>
<td>Able to accommodate hearing aid users</td>
<td>Induction loops fitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interim measures should be put in place to improve Hawkins House prior to moving</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Cleaner working environment, public areas, toilets etc.</td>
<td>Cleaner working environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review health and safety policy and procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ensure accommodation meets health and safety standards</td>
<td>New health and safety procedures in place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on physical access:-

- Guidelines have been issued to all staff on how to assist customers with disabilities
- New ramp has been installed in Joyce House and facilities there have been upgraded
4. Information

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication. Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure website is kept current and up-to-date</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Need for staff to be proactive about information Make information provision the responsibility of all relevant staff</td>
<td>On-line access to new, current, up-to-date, useful and relevant information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure healthNet (intranet) is kept current</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Need for staff to be proactive about information Make information provision the responsibility of all relevant staff</td>
<td>On-line access to new/current departmental information for staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that new departmental information on OASIS is kept up-to-date</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>User friendly on-line access to Guide to Health Services</td>
<td>Feedback received from users of Oasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure relevant publications are available in Irish, braille, large print etc. if requested</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Meet all customers needs</td>
<td>Customers needs met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to display current reports/health promotion literature in Hawkins House main foyer</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Easy access to hard copy material</td>
<td>Increased uptake by our customers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on information:
- Health Promotion/Health reports available electronically and in front foyer
- This Department has actively participated in OASIS – Comhairle’s On-line Access to Services, Information and Support and supplied large amounts of health related information.
5. Timeliness and Courtesy
To deliver services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.
Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deal promptly with requests for publications</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Provide an efficient service</td>
<td>Customer Service Request tracking reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce protocol regarding service delivery times, voicemail, email address etc.</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>To deliver services promptly and ensure ease of contact for customers</td>
<td>Protocol produced circulated and implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor and review existing service delivery standards</td>
<td>December 2003</td>
<td>Evaluate existing delivery standards</td>
<td>Market research carried out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on timeliness and courtesy:-
- Guidelines have issued to all staff recommending that contact names are given in all communications
- External Customer Service Survey carried out regarding reasonable response times etc.

6. Complaints
Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create quality of service feedback form on the website. Evaluate feedback and publicise</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>To encourage customers to give feedback</td>
<td>Feedback form available, forms evaluated and publicised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devise formal complaints procedures about service provided</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Develop best practice complaints procedures</td>
<td>Protocol developed circulated and implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on complaints:-
- Comment cards are now available in all public areas
- Quality of service complaints manager has been nominated and details circulated
7. Appeals

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devise formal appeals procedures about service provided</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Develop best practice appeals procedures</td>
<td>Protocol developed circulated and implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform customers of their right to appeal decisions on service delivery complaints</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Customers are made aware of their rights</td>
<td>Advertisements placed appropriately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on appeals:-

- Quality of Service appeals manager has been nominated and details circulated
8. Consultation and Evaluation

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services.

Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct annual external customer surveys</td>
<td>December 2003</td>
<td>Benchmark ourselves and set new targets</td>
<td>Surveys held and acted upon. Improvement in ratings as time progresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing consultation with QCS subgroup of internal Partnership Committee</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Continuous consultation on QCS and how to improve delivery</td>
<td>Appropriate service delivery changes made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Run Ringmaster reports on response rates etc. regularly Ringmaster allows evaluation of the calls received and dealt with at the switch</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate our response rates etc.</td>
<td>Reports run, circulated and changes made</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on consultation and evaluation:-

- External customer service survey carried out and evaluated
- Ringmaster software to be installed so that response rate reports can be run

9. Choice

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times.
Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue with GRO Modernisation Programme</td>
<td>As per Programme</td>
<td>Customers will be able to purchase registration certificates online, 24 hours a day.</td>
<td>Ability to purchase certs online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage use of voicemail</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Customers informed of availability, other contact numbers etc.</td>
<td>Effective use of voicemail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure sections are manned during relevant times</td>
<td>December 2003</td>
<td>Provide a service during office hours</td>
<td>Mystery shopper survey carried out where test calls are made to ensure service is provided at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure relevant publications are available on website</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Customers can access 24 hours per day</td>
<td>Publications on website</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on choice:-

- Faxed/Posted or counter applications (general and research) for certificates (births, deaths and marriages) can now be paid for by credit card
- New target response times to correspondence set as per External Customer Survey results

10. Official Languages Equality

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for compliance with Official Languages Equality Bill, 2002</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Be prepared for when legislation is enacted</td>
<td>Bill complied with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on official languages equality:-

- List of bilingual staff who are able and willing to deal with customers through Irish has been drawn up
- Irish content increased on website

11. Better Co-ordination

Foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue with the Civil Registration Modernisation Programme in conjunction with Dept. of Social &amp; Family Affairs</td>
<td>As per Programme</td>
<td>Provide an integrated service with Dept. of Social &amp; Family Affairs</td>
<td>Targets met as per timeframe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in ongoing eGovernment strategy</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Provide information electronically</td>
<td>Projects in place by target dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing commitment to implementation of civil service modernisation programme</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Ensure integrated approach to service delivery</td>
<td>Active involvement and participation in process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on better co-ordination:-

- Provision of information on websites such as the Department of Health and Children (www.doh.ie), Adoption Board (www.adoptionboard.ie), General Register Office (www.groireland.ie), Health Promotion Unit (www.healthpromotion.ie), National Children’s Office (www.nco.ie), Crisis Pregnancy Agency (www.crisispregnancy.ie), Forum on Water Fluoridation in Ireland (www.fluoridationforum.ie), Irish Social Services Inspectorate (www.issi.ie), The National Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery in the Community (www.namic.ie), Consultative Council on Hepatitis C (www.cchepc.ie),
- Co-ordinated with Comhairle for inclusion on OASIS – eGovernment initiative
- Civil Registration Modernisation Programme targets achieved to date

12. **Internal Customer**

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Target Date</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include internal customer module on all customer service training/</td>
<td>June 2003</td>
<td>Increase awareness of the importance of the internal customer</td>
<td>Internal Customer module included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>induction courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch Staff Suggestion Scheme on service delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen and acknowledge all suggestions</td>
<td>Staff Suggestion Scheme launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protocol developed for all staff regarding dealings with internal</td>
<td>March 2003</td>
<td>Treat others as you would wish to be treated</td>
<td>Protocol developed circulated and implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>customers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations of Climate Survey acted upon</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>Action Plan developed from recommendations made</td>
<td>Action Plan implemented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following has been achieved to date on consultation with the internal customer:-

- Quality Customer Service Partnership sub committee set up
- Appropriate training courses offered arising from Role Profile forms
- Hosca Internal Staff Climate Survey carried out

Appendix I – Consultation with the Internal Customer

A partnership sub committee on customer service was set up which included the following staff members:
Marie Dullea, (Chair) Change Management Team
Elizabeth Barrett, Hospital Planning Office
Elizabeth Canavan, Partnership
Angela Good, Change Management Team
Pat Hastings, Partnership
Seán McCormack, General Register Office
Michael Mulkerrin, Customer Services Unit
Oilbhe O'Donoghue, Health Promotion Unit
David Owens, Physical Disability Services
Jean Troy, Change Management Team

The following members of staff made valuable contributions towards this plan.
Fergal Goodman, Primary Care Task Force

Appendix II – Principal Contact Points

Department of Health and Children
Hawkins House
Appendix III – Consultation with the External Customers

Introduction
The Department has conducted a survey of the Health Boards and a range of Health Agencies to evaluate and improve the level of customer service offered to these customers. A copy of the survey questions is included. A total of 23 surveys were sent out and 16 were returned. This gave a response rate of 70%

Summary of Results
The sections of the survey discussed in this report are
- Telephone callers
- Personal callers
- Correspondence
- Forms/Returns
- Website
- General comments from Health Boards and Agencies.

**Telephone Callers**
The agencies were very positive in their response to the questions relating to the telephone calls of the Department with 75% of respondents claiming that their queries are dealt with efficiently and promptly. All agencies stated that they use Direct Dial Inwards (DDI). This reduces the waiting time for callers and enables a more efficient and effective service. All agencies also stated that they are treated in a friendly and courteous manner.

The graph below shows the satisfaction levels of the agencies with the response time of the switch, the response time of the section or division, the response time to any voicemail messages left and the handling of call transfers.

**Personal Callers**
Personal callers to the Department are, in general, positive about the service that they receive. This question was only relevant for 75% of respondents, of which 68.75% of respondents reported that they were treated in a friendly and courteous manner when they called to the Department. The question concerning satisfaction with the facilities within the Department was relevant to 68.75% of the respondents. Of these 100% reported that the facilities were satisfactory.

**Correspondence**
The graph below displays the satisfaction levels of health boards and agencies with Departmental correspondence.
Forms/Returns
The question relating to Departmental Forms/Returns only applied to 37.5% of health boards and agencies. Of these, 100% of them reported that the forms/returns are clear and easy to understand.

Website
81.25% of the health boards and agencies reported that they use the website and 100% of these claimed that it is clear and easily navigated.

Comments from Health Boards and Agencies
Positive Comments
- The services referred to in the survey have improved considerably in the past two years
- The publications section of the website is very useful

Negative Comments
- There is still a tendency for some people not to give their name on answering the phone
- Voicemail messages left for Departmental staff are rarely followed up but if information is requested by the Department it is expected in a very short timeframe
- Overuse of the voicemail often impedes speedy telephone contact with Department officials
- In telephone contact if you don’t know who you want specifically it can be quite a challenge to find who you are looking for

Suggestions for Improved Customer Service
- Information should be more easily accessible – took 3 weeks to get 2 data tables
- If a response is going to be delayed for reasons outside of the control of the individual/Department, this should be explained to avoid over ambitious expectations
- Stand-alone agencies need some forum in order to interact with the Health Boards
o An on-line phone directory would be useful (with up-to-date direct dial numbers for individuals and sections)
The Department of Health and Children is committed to providing a high quality service to all its customers. In order to help us monitor and improve our level of service, we would welcome and value your comments and suggestions for improvement.

As a telephone caller to the Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How satisfied are you with the:</th>
<th>very satisfied</th>
<th>satisfied</th>
<th>dissatisfied</th>
<th>very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Response time of the main switch (01 - 635 4000)?</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Response time of Sections/Divisions?</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Response time to your voicemail messages?</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Handling of call transfers?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Are you treated in a friendly and courteous manner? [ ]
Are your queries dealt with efficiently and promptly? [ ]
Do you use Direct Dial Inwards (DDI) i.e. ringing people directly (635 + ext. no.) [ ]

As a personal caller to the Department’s Offices

Are you treated in a friendly and courteous manner? [ ]

Are facilities for customers satisfactory? [ ]
If ‘no’, please give details: _______________________________________________________

As a correspondent with the Department, in general

Do you get a response within a reasonable timeframe? [ ]
Do you receive prompt replies to your email messages? [ ]
Are replies you receive clear and easy to understand? [ ]
In response to queries, are you satisfied with the level of advice/assistance received from the Department? [ ]

As a user of our Forms/Returns (where relevant)

Are these easy to understand? [ ]
If ‘No’, please give details: _______________________________________________________

Page 27 of 28
As a user of our Website (www.doh.ie)

Did you find it easy to navigate?

Yes  No  N/A

Any suggested changes, amendments, additions, or deletions to our website?:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

The Department is hoping to set targets for response times.
In your opinion, what would a reasonable response time be for:

Main switch (number of rings) _____________________________________________
Section or Division (number of rings) _______________________________________
Mail (number of days) _____________________________________________________
Fax (number of days) _______________________________________________________  
email (number of days) _____________________________________________________

Other Comments
Any other comments on the service you receive/have received or suggestions for improving quality of service to customers would be much appreciated.
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Contact details optional

Organisation Name : _________________________________________________________
Contact Name : ___________________________________________________________
Tel. No. : _________________________________________________________________
email : _________________________________________________________________
Address : ________________________________________________________________
Date: ____________________________

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.
Please return in the enclosed addressed envelope by Wednesday, 13th November 2002