

Department of Health Customer Complaints Procedure

What is a complaint?

We define a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction concerning the provision of a service or services by the Department, as laid out under the commitments in our Customer Charter.

What is covered by our Complaints Procedure?

The Complaints Procedure covers complaints about issues such as delays, mistakes and poor customer services which the Department provides, i.e. instances where you did not receive the quality of service from the Department you feel you are entitled to.

The Complaints Procedure does not cover

- Matters of policy
- Complaints relating to a hospital/the HSE or other health agency (in such cases you should contact the agency concerned directly).
- Matters which are the subject of litigation.
- Matters which have been referred to the Ombudsman or Information Commissioner.

How to make a complaint?

If you have a cause for complaint, it should be directed initially to the relevant unit of the Department. Our staff there will try to deal with the problem without delay or, if the complaint does not relate to a service provided by us, direct you to the appropriate body. If you do not know the name of the person in the section to contact or if you are unsure which body you should make your complaint to, our Customer Service Officer, who will be happy to advise you;

If the staff of the unit cannot resolve your complaint, or you are unhappy with their response, you can ask for the matter to be reviewed by a senior member of staff from that section;

If you are still unhappy with the response, you should make a formal complaint to the Customer Service Officer, who will investigate the complaint on your behalf;

You can make a complaint by phone or fax, in writing or by e-mail.

Department Address	Department of Health Hawkins House Hawkins Street Dublin 2 D02 VW90
Telephone/Fax Number	(01) 6353000 – (01)
Department e-mail address	complaints@health.gov.ie

What information should you provide?

- You will help to speed up the investigation of your complaint by providing the following details:
- Your name, address and e-mail address;
- Exactly what you were dissatisfied with;
- The name of the official or section you dealt with;
- A daytime telephone number.

Departments Commitments when dealing with Formal Complaints

- We will acknowledge all complaints within 3 working days;
- We will investigate all complaints and issue a reply to your complaint within 15 working days or, where this is not possible, an interim reply will issue explaining the position and advising when a substantive response will issue;
- All complaints will be treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- We will keep records of complaints separate from other records;
- We will ensure that no complaint you have made in good faith will be used to your disadvantage in the future;
- We will endeavour to learn from mistakes to ensure that errors are not repeated.

Can you appeal?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation by the Customer Service Officer, the matter may be appealed to the Head of Communications. The deadlines for responding to appeals will be the same as those for formal complaints (outlined above).

Address	Principal Officer Head of Communications Department of Health Hawkins Street Dublin 2 D02 VW90
Telephone	(01) 635 4477
e-mail address	Press_office@health.gov.ie

If the matter is still not resolved?

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your appeal, you have a right to appeal to the Office of the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is completely independent of the Government and the service is free. Nothing in this complaints procedure affects your statutory rights under Freedom of Information, Data Protection, or other relevant legislation.

Address	Office of the Ombudsman 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2
Telephone/Fax Number	(01) 639 6500 1890 223 030 (Lo-call) (01) 639 5674 (Fax)
e-mail	ombudsman@ombudsman.ie