

Arts Council Customer Charter 2017

Principles of quality customer service for customers of the Arts Council



1. Customer Charter

In its dealings with the public, the Arts Council is committed to providing an excellent service in accordance with the Principles of Quality Customer Service approved by Government.

2. General Information

We provide comprehensive and up-to-date information about the Arts Council on our website <http://www.artscouncil.ie/home>

3. Mission Statement

Our mission is to lead the development of the arts in Ireland.

We do this in four ways:

- We advocate the importance and value of the arts and promote their practice and development.
- We advise government and others on the arts as required by the Arts Act of 1951, 1973 and 2003.
- We invest public monies allocated to us by government in supporting artists and arts organisations to make work of excellence and in other actions consistent with our remit.
- We work in partnership with the Department of Culture, Heritage & the Gaeltacht and with other government departments as well as with local government and with agencies and organisations within and beyond the cultural sector.

4. Official Languages

We are fully committed to complying with the requirements outlined in the Official Languages Act, 2003.

Our corporate Irish language policy is

<http://www.artscouncil.ie/Official-language-scheme/>

5. Our Website, www.artscouncil.ie

Our website is currently available in Irish and English. It details our work, activities and all corporate information relating to the Arts Council; provides information on funding and governance and a library of publications including a monthly Newsletter.

6. Internal Customer

We are committed to ensuring that staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted.

7. Contact by Telephone

We will be available to answer your calls during office hours of 9.15am to 5.30pm Monday-Friday. Our aim is to answer all calls as promptly as possible. We will identify ourselves and our area of work, be helpful and courteous, and do our best to provide clear and accurate information.

If we cannot provide an immediate answer, we will take details of your query and your call will be returned by an individual who can give you a considered response and/or we will arrange to have information sent to you. When the person you wish to speak to is unavailable, you will be given the option to be put through to his/her voicemail. We aim to respond to voicemail messages within one working day. Our main telephone number is **00353 (0) 1 6180200**.

8. Electronic and Written Communications

All queries raised via the Arts Council website are logged and queued for response. All enquiries are dealt with in rotation. We aim to respond to enquiries within 3 working days from date of receipt. In cases where a response will take longer, we will send you an interim reply within 3 working days from date of receipt explaining the position and relating a specific timescale for response.

We will ensure that staff use automated email messages when out of the office to ensure that the customer is given another point of contact within the relevant office.

Where the information you are looking for is not directly available from the Arts Council, we will advise on alternative information sources or resources.

All post delivered to the Arts Council is date stamped and distributed to the relevant person/team leader. We will ensure all our written replies include the name, address, email address and any other relevant contact details of the staff member who is responding to your correspondence.

9. Meetings and Visits to our Offices

Please pre-arrange meetings with staff in our offices before your arrival to ensure their availability to meet with you and avoid any unnecessary inconvenience you may experience if they are unavailable. Where it is not possible for you to meet during office hours, we will try to be flexible and meet you at a mutually convenient time.

Visitors are requested to sign the Visitors' Book in Reception upon arrival.

10. Physical Access

We will ensure our public offices are accessible in so far as possible and we will provide maximum assistance and support to enable you to conduct your business.

We will monitor access across all aspects of the Arts Council's work and we have introduced clear requirements for art organisations, particularly venues, to monitor and report on disability inclusion and to address any deficits. We will review accessibility across all our funding programmes and awards to ensure that disability specific needs (where possible) are being met.

11. Equality/Diversity

We will treat our customers with respect and courtesy and ensuring there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race or membership of the Traveller Community. We will identify and seek to eliminate barriers to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

12. Complaints

We aim to deliver the best possible service to our customers. If you are dissatisfied with the *quality of service* that you have received you have the right to complain. We recommend that you contact the Arts

Council or the manager of the service you have been dealing with to let them know your concerns. The manager will discuss your concerns with you and if you remain unhappy you can make a formal complaint by writing to the Council.

Complaints must be made in writing (or equivalent) within 1 month of the date the alleged incident occurred and must provide the details of the complaint.

All written complaints will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt and will be investigated by the appropriate member of the Arts Councils Senior Staff. A written response to the complaint will be provided within 20 working days from the date that the Council receives your complaint.

If you are not happy with our reply, you can refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for consideration. We will cooperate with the Ombudsman or any other people or organisations that act for you.

Office of Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

Telephone: 01 678 5222 **Email:** ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

13. Appeals

Applicants may appeal against a funding decision on the basis of an alleged infringement or unfair application of, or a deviation from the Council's published procedures. The appeal process is detailed on our website. Appeals are heard throughout the year and are considered by an appeals panel. The conclusions and recommendations of the panel are forwarded to the next plenary meeting of the Council for final decision.

14. Freedom of Information Acts 2014 (FOI)

The FOI Acts gives members of the public the right to access to all official records, paper and electronic, in possession of the Arts Council. Access to information under the Act is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits.

More information about Freedom of Information is available on our website.

Should you wish to make a request under FOI for access to records which you believe are held by the Arts Council, you should write to our HR and Corporate Services Officer stating clearly that you are requesting information under the FOI Acts. You may also submit an FOI request by e-mail to: foi@artscouncil.ie

15. Monitor and Evaluate our performance

We will evaluate our performance against the standards set out in this Charter on a continuous basis.

16. Help us to help you

To assist us in reaching our service standards, we would be grateful if you could quote any relevant reference number in all communication with us and ensure that application forms are fully, accurately and legibly completed by the specified deadline (where applicable).

Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of schemes before completing application forms and provide all necessary supporting documentation as required. Please inform us of any changes to your circumstance which may have a bearing on decisions made by the Arts Council.

Please treat our staff with respect. Customers are advised that if any of our staff are subject to any abusive, violent, threatening or disruptive behaviour, contact will have to be terminated. The principles of consultation will remain central to our work over the lifetime of this plan.

