

Department of Health and Children An Roinn Sláinte agus Leanaí



Customer Service

Action Plan 1998 - 1999

Plean Gníomhaíochta 1998 - 1999



DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH & CHILDREN
AN ROINN SLÁINTE
AGUS LEANAÍ

104675



In May of 1997 the Department produced, as part of the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI), its first Statement of Strategy. In it we identified our partnership with the providers of health care and co-operation with other government departments, statutory bodies and non-statutory bodies as being central to the achievement of our key objectives.

The primary function of the Department relates to the formulation and evaluation of policies for the health services. The provision of these services is a function of the health care providers. The Statement of Strategy went on to explain how this partnership will be further developed in order to protect, promote and restore the health and well-being of the public. As a result the health care providers, government departments, statutory bodies and non- statutory bodies are key customer groups of the Department.

The next step for the Department was to set out, over the two year period 1998 - 1999, how it proposed to examine and improve the services that it provides to all of its customer groups.

This document, our Customer Action Plan, which is part of the ongoing SMI process, is the first time for us to state how we intend to better organise the services that we provide. In this document we :

- set down information that you will need in order to contact us;
- list the services we provide directly to you;
- and list the changes which, over the next two years, will be implemented in order to provide you with a better and easier service to use.

In the Department we are acutely aware of the pivotal role we play in conjunction with the health care providers and of the responsibilities this places upon us. The staff of the Department are committed to providing you with the best possible service. As part of this Action Plan all staff are being given an opportunity to examine how the Customer Services in their respective areas can be improved. This process of consultation will continue.

We are examining our points of contact with you. We have yet to complete this work and we see the two year programme that we have set out here as being a very practical and worthwhile beginning. The Department is committed to providing you with the best possible service that it can. We are prepared to listen to you, to consult widely and to persist with making the necessary improvements for as long as it takes.

In 1997, the Department of Health and Children celebrated 50 years of delivering services to the public and of working closely with the country's health care providers. The rate of change in recent years as a result of developments in medical technology, drugs and treatments and their impact on health services has been dramatic. In changing to meet these new demands, we undertake not to lose sight of your needs so that we will begin the next 50 years with confidence and a renewed commitment to quality service.

Department of Health and Children
December, 1997

In May 1997 we published our Statement of Strategy and in it we developed further on the key issues we had identified in "Shaping a Healthier Future" published in April 1994.

The Statement of Strategy set down the following Mission Statement for the Department which is :

" in a partnership with the providers of health care, and in co-operation with other government departments, statutory and non-statutory bodies,

to protect, promote and restore the health and well-being of people by ensuring that health and personal social services are planned, managed and delivered to achieve measurable health and social gain and provide the optimum return on resources invested. "

It also identified our key tasks as :

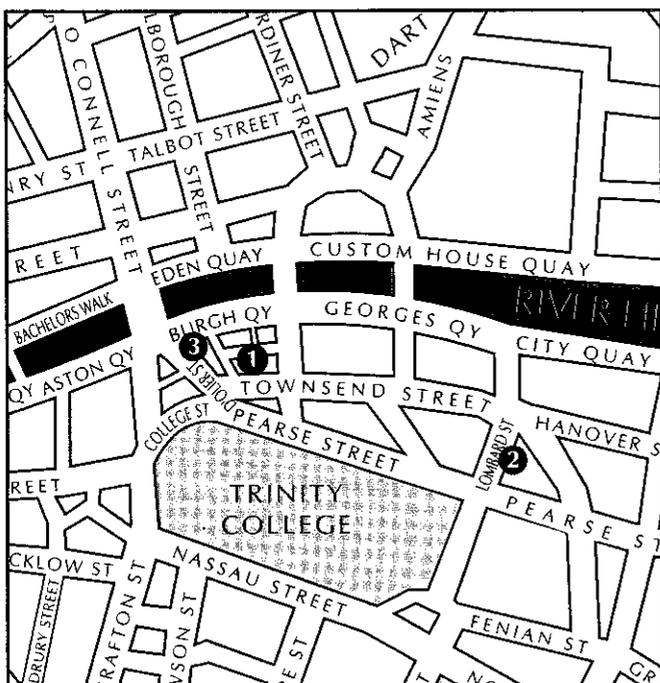
- supporting the Minister in the formulation, development and evaluation of health policy and in the discharge of all other Ministerial functions;
- planning the strategic development of services, through partnership and consultation with health boards, the voluntary sector, other relevant government departments and other interests;
- encouraging the attainment of the highest standards of effectiveness, efficiency, equity, quality and value for money in the health delivery system;
- strengthening accountability at all levels of the health service;
- optimising staff performance, training and development;
- representing the Irish interest in European Union, World Health Organisation and international fora relating to health matters;
- encouraging the continuing development of a customer service ethos in the delivery of health services.

The Department of Health and Children in Dublin :

The Department of Health and Children is located in three separate buildings in the City Centre :

1. *Hawkins House*,
the Department's Head Office, is where the Minister, the Ministers of State, the Secretary General and the majority of the staff are located.
2. *Joyce House*,
Lombard Street East where the General Register Office is located.
3. *O'Connell Bridge House*,
where staff working in the Food Unit, Environmental Health Unit and Medicines Division are located.

In addition there are a number of staff of the Department working in the Adoption Board which is based in Shelbourne House, Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4 (01 - 667 1392).



Planned Move of the General Register Office (GRO) to Roscommon :

There are a number of staff of the Department based in Roscommon preparing for the move there of the General Register Office. This move is part of the Government's de-centralisation programme. In order to facilitate this move a major computerisation project is underway which will greatly enhance the service provided by the Office.

Key Summary Information for Contacting the Department :

Department of Health and Children

Hawkins House, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 - 671 4711

Fax: 01 - 677 1695 01 - 671 1947

Department of Health and Children

O'Connell Bridge House,
D'Olier Street, Dublin 2

Tel: 01 - 671 4711

Fax: 01 - 671 3164

GRO - Dublin

Joyce House,
8 - 11 Lombard Street East,
Dublin 2

Tel: 01 - 671 1000

(9.30am - 12.30pm & 2.15pm - 4.30pm)

Fax: 01 - 671 1243

GRO - Roscommon

Enterprise Centre,
Racecourse Road,
Roscommon

Tel: 0903 - 27330

Fax: 0903 - 27324

You can also visit us on the Internet at :
<http://www.doh.ie/>

or write to us at our e-mail address :
queries@health.irlgov.ie

The General Register Office which is located in Joyce House, 8 - 11 Lombard Street East, Dublin 2 is the Office in the Department to have most contact with the Public. The opening hours are : 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. and in the afternoon 2.15 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

The main work of the Office is the administration of the registration service on a national level. The registration of births, deaths and marriages enables members of the public to establish rights, entitlements and status in a range of different circumstances.

The GRO in Dublin is the national centre for events registered in the country and the Office draws together the work of a network of Superintendent Registrars and Registrars based around the country.

If you are unsure as to who you should contact when you wish to register an event or when you wish to get a certificate in relation to a particular event a useful rule of thumb is to check where the event itself actually took place. You should then contact the Superintendent Registrar's office for that county or area. A list of their phone numbers is attached.

A fee is charged when you request a certificate and your local office will be in a position to advise you about the fees applicable to each service.

The Department, in its first Statement of Strategy highlighted plans for a Quality Customer Service Initiative in the GRO. Specifically it would focus on :

- improvements in communication services;
- customer service training for front-line staff;
- redesigning and improving the forms used and
- measures to improve the efficiency of the service provided.

These measures will be a focus of attention, as part of this Action Plan, for the Department in 1998 and 1999.

Superintendent Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages :

Carlow	0503-31691
Cavan	049-61399
Clare	065-28525
Cork (North)	022-21123
Cork (South)	021-275126
Cork (West)	028-21299
Donegal (North)	074-24576
Donegal (South)	074-31038
Dublin (City & Co)	01-6711968
Galway	091-528966
Kerry	064-32251
Kildare	045-876001
Kilkenny	056-21208
Laois	0502-21135
Leitrim	078-20308
Limerick (City)	061-326677
Limerick (Co.)	069-62545
Longford	043-46211
Louth	042-32287
Mayo	094-23249
Meath	046-31512
Monaghan	047-81333
Offaly	0506-41301
Roscommon	0903-26518
Sligo	071-60222
Tipperary (North)	067-31212
Tipperary (South)	052-22011
Waterford (City)	051-52296
Waterford (County)	058-42199
Westmeath	044-40221
Wexford	053-23522
Wicklow	0404-68400
GRO Dublin	01-6711000

This Unit produces information materials on a wide range of health-related topics which are available to the public free of charge. It also maintains a selection of videos on health-related topics, available on loan and without charge to health and education professionals. The following is a list of materials currently available from the Health Promotion Unit :

Babies and Children

Food and Babies
 Gastroenteritis
 Headlice
 Meningitis
 Prevention of Neural Tube Defects
 Breast Fed is Best Fed
 Protect your Child Immunise
 Reduce the Risk of Cot Death
 Screening for Metabolic Disorders
 Toxoplasmosis

Smoking

Information on Health and Smoking
 Smoking and Pregnancy
 Working Together for Cleaner Air
 A Smoke-Free Environment for the Public

Drugs / Solvent Abuse

Cannabis
 Drugs, your Choice your Life
 (for Young People)
 Ecstasy
 Solvent Abuse (A guide for Parents and Professionals)
 Facts about Drug Abuse in Ireland
 (for Professionals)

Nutrition

Fibre Rich Foods
 Your Child's Lunchbox
 Food Tips for Older People

Hygiene

At Home with Food Hygiene
 Get Mr Germ on the Run
 Infection in School
 (A Manual for School Personnel)

Women's Health

Hysterectomy
 Menopause
 Periods
 Miscarriage

General

AIDS - The Facts
 Bereavement
 Knowledge - Best Medicine
 Eating Disorders (Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa)
 E.Coli
 Family Planning and Contraception
 General Health Information for People Travelling Abroad
 Hepatitis B - The Other Virus
 Hepatitis C
 Influenza
 Listeria and Listeriosis
 The Ageing Foot
 Sexually Transmitted Diseases
 The Sun Seekers Guide to Health

Posters

AIDS
 Anti-Smoking Stickers and Signs
 First Aid Index Chart
 Alcohol, Smoking
 Drugs, Exercise

You can order copies of this information literature locally by contacting the following:

Health Promotion Officer
Midland Health Board
Arden Road, Tullamore,
Co. Offaly
0506 - 46733

Health Promotion Officer
Mid-Western Health Board
Parkview House,
Pery Street, Limerick
061 - 483218

The Health Promotion Office
North Western Health Board
Main Street, Ballyshannon,
Co. Donegal
072 - 52000

Health Promotion Officer
North Eastern Health Board
Railway Street,
Navan, Co. Meath
046 - 71872

Senior Health Promotion Officer
South Eastern Health Board
Dean Street, Kilkenny
056 - 61400

Health Promotion Officer
Southern Health Board
4 Carriglee,
Western Road, Cork
021 - 278464

Senior Health Education Officer
Western Health Board
Health Centre, Shantalla, Galway
091 - 523122

In the Eastern Health Board area the Directors of Community Care at the following Community Care Offices have literature available:

Tivoli Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
01 - 2843579

21- 25 Lord Edward Street, Dublin 2
01 - 6792611

Cherry Orchard Hospital, Ballyfermot,
Dublin 10
01 - 6268101

Áras Daimhin, Jones's Road, Dublin 3
01 - 8552000

Poplar House, Poplar Square, Naas,
Co Kildare
045 - 76001

Vergemount Hall, Clonskeagh Road,
Dublin 6
01 - 2698222

Health Centre, Old County Road,
Dublin 12
01 - 4542511

Rathdown Road, Dublin 7
01 - 8680444

Health Centre, Cromcastle Road, Coolock,
Dublin 5
01 - 8476122

Glenside Road, Wicklow
0404 - 68400

The most up-to-date list of leaflets at any given time is available on request from the Health Promotion Unit at (01) 671 4711.

A wide range of customers make contact with the Offices, Units and Divisions within the Department.

They are :

- Members of the public
- Public Representatives and members of the Oireachtas
- Staff in Health Boards and Voluntary Hospitals
- Staff in Voluntary Sector Organisations
- Staff in Private Sector Organisations
- Staff of other Government Departments
- Groups representing a specific health interest
- Officials of international organisations
- Officials of the European Union
- Members of the media
- Schools and school children

We are conscious that these groups of customers have different needs to be met by the Department and that their contacts with us can be through a number of means viz. by letter, including fax and e-mail, by phone and by calling in to the Department to meet with staff. The following initiatives in our Action Plan will benefit all our customer groups.

The Customer Call In Centre :

As a result of the feedback from the on-going SMI process within the Department and as part of the Department's implementation of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 we propose, in 1998, to develop and establish a Customer Call In Centre which will provide you with a well

organised and speedy point of contact for your information needs. It will be based in Hawkins House in Dublin's City Centre.

As part of our compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 we will also provide you with clear information on your rights under the Act and provide you with the necessary advice and assistance.

When operational, the Customer Call In Centre will :

- have a re-designed and user friendly Reception Area for visitors on the Ground Floor of Hawkins House which will incorporate the needs of people with physical disabilities;
- include a new telephone handling centre for telephone callers; our aim will be to answer as many of your queries as we possibly can, there and then; if your query is more appropriate to an external agency we will inform you of this and tell you how to contact them;
- avail of the Lo-Call service, a 1-890 number; this will enable you to contact the Department by phone anywhere in the country for the cost of a local call;
- have a more accessible public area for displaying Health Promotion literature;
- be managed by staff who will receive training in order to provide you with a friendly and efficient service.

Written Correspondence :

The Department receives a large amount of correspondence from all of its customer groups every day. Very often, when a letter is received, the information can be provided by an appropriate division in the Department. In cases such as this, the Department will undertake to provide a reply to the issues raised in the letter within 20 working days. If the correspondence requires a further, more detailed response which will take longer than this, an interim letter will issue to you stating who it is within the Department is dealing with your letter and when you can expect to receive a final reply.

We will investigate the possibility of telephoning you if the issues raised can be more quickly and efficiently handled in that manner.

Similarly, correspondence frequently arrives in to the Department raising issues which, in the first instance, are best handled by a health board or other health agency. If this is the case, we undertake to send it to that agency immediately. They will be asked to reply to you directly within 20 working days. If the correspondence cannot be dealt with by the agency in this timeframe, we will ask them to send you an interim reply which will outline when you can expect a final reply.

Telephone Calls :

We will introduce Direct Dial Inwards (DDI) for contacting staff of the Department based in Hawkins House. This facility will enable you to ring staff of the Department directly once you know their extension.

When you make contact with us via our main phone number we undertake to :

- answer your call promptly at the Switch Board;
- if appropriate, put your call through to our new Customer Call In Centre.

If it cannot be dealt with there, because of the nature of the call, we will :

- put you through, promptly, to the Section within the Department dealing with that area. We will tell you the name of the Section and who you should talk to;
- undertake to answer 90% of such phone calls within 15 seconds;
- identify ourselves when answering your call; and
- if the member of staff cannot provide you with the answer to your query he/she will take your name and phone number and will undertake to call you back at an agreed time with the information you require.

If your query is more appropriate to an external agency we will inform you of this and tell you how to contact them.

Staff Training and Development :

For those staff who will come in to contact with the public we will undertake an analysis of staff training needs and we will provide *suitable customer service training events* as appropriate.

The Role of the Health Agencies :

The staff of the Department are aware that *they provide only one small part of a quality customer service*. A truly comprehensive customer service plan can only be delivered with the assistance and participation of the health service providers, primarily the Health Boards and the major voluntary hospitals. In parallel with developing and implementing the *initiatives outlined in this Action Plan*, the Department will, beginning in 1998, encourage them to participate in a wider Customer Service Plan for the whole health service.

Seirbhís trí Ghaeilge :

Ó am go h-am bíonn ar an Roinn seirbhís a chur ar fáil i nGaeilge agus tá áthas orainn é seo a dhéanamh. Chun go mbeidh seirbhís shásúil ar fáil do dhaoine atá ag iarraidh a ngnó a dhéanamh as Gaeilge táimid chun *duine den fhoireann a chur i gceannas ar an obair seo*.

- Má bhíonn tú i dteagmháil linn as Gaeilge beidh sé mar aidhm againn go mbeidh daoine sa Roinn ábalta seirbhís shásúil trí Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil.

- Táimid chun scrúdú a dhéanamh ar na foirmeacha atá in úsáid sa Roinn. Mar chuid den obair seo beidh sé mar aidhm againn leagan Gaeilge a dhéanamh de fhoirmeacha nach bhfuil ar fáil i nGaeilge faoi láthair.

- Eagrófar cursaí traenála do dhaoine sa Roinn atá ag cur seirbhíse trí Ghaeilge ar fáil.

It will be our aim to have staff available to deal with you should you contact us through Irish.

We will be examining the forms in use throughout the Department and will provide Irish versions of the forms if they do not exist at present.

Irish language training will be provided for those staff dealing with customers in Irish.

The Department will assign a member of staff to oversee this work.

Consulting with our Customers :

This Action Plan is our first step towards providing you with an improved quality service. It is based on our understanding of your needs at this time. We propose, however, to consult with you in 1998 by setting up a Customer Consultation Group. The aim of the group will be to meet with the Department and to tell us how you think the services you receive from us could be improved.

We will also place Customer Comment Cards in our public offices and reception areas. This will provide callers to our offices with an opportunity to provide direct feedback on the service received.

Setting down our aims and targets in this way, as we have stated, is just the beginning. It will require the co-operation and goodwill of the staff of the Department. There is a willingness in the Department to change the way work is done in order to improve the services. Staff want to be associated with a quality customer service.

Monitoring and Reviewing our Action Plan :

As the programme we have outlined is being implemented we will identify, develop and measure key service indicators which will tell us if the service being provided as a result of the Action Plan has improved. To do this, we propose to get external and independent advice in this area. These surveys will be conducted over the period of the Action Plan as a way of monitoring its effectiveness.

Customer Service Co-ordinator :

The new arrangements outlined above will be put in place by the Department on a phased basis in 1998 and 1999. Despite these efforts and the best efforts of our staff, we may not get our Service to you exactly right every time. If you would like to comment, good or bad, on the service you have received from us you should phone or write to our :

Customer Service Co-ordinator
Hawkins House
Dublin 2
01 - 671 4711

whose role will be to listen to your comments on our service and to feed them back to staff at all levels in the Department. We will listen to what you have to say in an open and understanding manner. If we discover that we have been less than helpful to you we will apologise and make every effort to ensure that a similar situation does not arise again.

Office of the Ombudsman :

If you continue to be unhappy with the response of the Department you can contact the :

Office of the Ombudsman
52 St Stephen's Green
Dublin 2
Telephone : 01 - 678 5222

who is ideally placed to examine in a more formal way the complaint you may have against the Department.

HEALTH BOARDS

Eastern Health Board,
Dr Steevens Hospital, Dublin 8
01 - 6790700
Freephone 1 800 520520

Eastern Health Board (Kildare Area)
Poplar House, Poplar Square,
Naas, Co. Kildare
045 - 876001

Eastern Health Board (Wicklow Area)
Glenside Road, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow
0404 - 68400

Midland Health Board
Arden Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
0506 - 21868

Mid-Western Health Board
31 - 33 Catherine Street, Limerick
061 - 316655

North-Eastern Health Board
Navan Road, Kells, Co. Meath
046 - 40341

North-Western Health Board
Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim
072 - 55123

South-Eastern Health Board
Lacken, Dublin Road, Kilkenny
056 - 51702

Southern Health Board
Cork Farm Centre, Dennehy's Cross,
Wilton Road, Cork
021 - 545011

Western Health Board
Merlin Park Regional Hospital, Galway
091 - 751131

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Disability Federation of Ireland
2 Sandyford Office Park,
Dublin 18
01 - 2959344 01- 2959345

Irish Cancer Society
5 Northumberland Road, Dublin 4
01 - 6681855

Irish Heart Foundation
4 Clyde Road, Dublin 4
01 - 6685001

Mental Health Association of Ireland
6 Adelaide Road, Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin
01 - 2841166

National Association for the
Mentally Handicapped in Ireland
5 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2
01 - 6766035

National Rehabilitation Board
25 Clyde Road, Dublin 4
01 - 6684181

National Social Service Board
Hume House, Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4
01 - 6059000

Department of Social,
Community and Family Affairs
Áras Mhic Dhiarmada, Store St.,
Dublin 1
01 - 8748444

Quality Service Standards

To publish a statement which outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can legitimately expect and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

Information

To take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely, accurate, available at all points of contact and meets the needs of people with disabilities.

Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

Timeliness and Courtesy

To deliver services with courtesy and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

Respect the rights of minorities at all times in the delivery of services.

Complaints

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

Redress

To introduce a formalised system for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions.

Consultation

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

Choice

To provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times.

Provide services for those who wish to do business through Irish.

Better Co-ordination

To foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of services.

Access

To provide clean, accessible public offices which ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and facilitate access for people with disabilities.

Give contact names in all telephone and written communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.