

Jobs & Benefits Service customer charter



**Are you looking for work or
claiming benefits?**

**The Department for Employment and Learning
and the Social Security Agency
are working together for you.**

JobCentre

DEPARTMENT for EMPLOYMENT and LEARNING



**SOCIAL
SECURITY
AGENCY**

AN AGENCY WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Welcome to our customer charter.

Our Jobs & Benefits Service is a new way of delivering services to people looking for work, claiming benefits or both. It brings together in one place the services that the Department for Employment and Learning and the Social Security Agency provide to:

- help more people into paid work;
- help employers fill their vacancies; and
- give people support when claiming benefits.

Some areas already have Jobs & Benefits offices. In other areas JobCentres and Social Security Offices will provide the same services as before, until all our offices come together.

This charter tells you about the range and level of service that you can expect to receive. It also tells you what we expect from you, as our customer, and what you should do if things go wrong. As our service develops, we will update this charter to reflect the changing needs of our customers.

The offices covered by the charter are all Jobs & Benefits offices, the Social Security Agency's Incapacity Division and Medical Support Services. Contact details are in the Phone Book or Yellow Pages under 'Government Offices'.



Will Haire
Permanent Secretary,
Department for Employment and Learning

Tommy O'Reilly
Chief Executive,
Social Security Agency

Looking for work

We will help you to get work or improve your chances of getting work by:

- giving you details of job opportunities, including jobs from some employment agencies and jobs in other parts of Europe; and
- giving you information and advice:
 - to help you find a job; and
 - on training and preparation-for-work programmes.

If you are thinking about changing your career, we can refer you to the Careers Service.

If you have a disability, Disablement Employment Advisers can advise you on work and training opportunities and give you access to specialist programmes and incentives.



Claiming benefits

We will give you information and advice about:

- all benefits and social security services you may be entitled to when you are in or out of work; and
- tax credits and other help that you may be able to get.

When you claim any benefits, we will do the following.

- Let you know what benefit you will get and when, or let you know if we need more information. For some benefits this could include medical advice on your disability from specially-trained doctors who may assess you in medical examination centres or at your home.
- Help you fill in benefit claim forms.
- Pay you the right amount of benefit on time.
- Tell you how changes in your circumstances (for example, starting work) can affect your benefit. We will also tell you about any other help you may be able to get.

How we will pay you

We pay benefits and pensions directly into bank, building society or Post Office® accounts. If you do not have an account, we can tell you about the different types of account that are available. If you are unable to open one, please contact us.

Further information

We also offer a full range of leaflets and information about other services that are available.

Contacting us

If you want to visit us, our offices are open from 9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. Medical examination centres are open from 8.40am. (Medical examination centres can only see you if you have an appointment.) If you want to phone us, all our offices are open from 9am to 5pm. Textphone facilities are available in each office. Our offices are closed on most bank holidays and public holidays.

Information on the internet

You can get details of job vacancies at www.jobcentreonline.com

You can find information about the full range of services provided by the Department for Employment and Learning at www.delni.gov.uk and the full range of social security benefits and services at www.dsdni.gov.uk

You can get information about tax credits at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Our standards

Identification

Whenever you contact us, the person you deal with will give you his or her name.

When you phone us

We aim to answer calls to direct-dial numbers within 20 seconds. If we cannot deal with your enquiry immediately, we will arrange to return your call at an agreed time.

When you visit the office

When you visit our offices we will ask you how we can help. If you call without an appointment, we will try to



see you within 15 minutes. If you have an appointment, we aim to see you within 10 minutes of your appointment time. If you are waiting longer, we will keep you informed. Medical examination centres can only see you if you have an appointment.

Other arrangements

If you cannot call at our office, in certain circumstances we can arrange to meet with you at a convenient time and place.

When you write to us

When you contact us by letter, fax or e-mail, we will acknowledge any request for information within two working days and reply within 10 working days of the date we receive it.



If we cannot deal with your letter, fax or e-mail fully within 10 working days, we will tell you why and let you know:

- if there is anything you need to do; and
- how long it will be before we can give you a full answer.

If your first language is not English

If you need an interpreter when you visit us, we can (if you want us to) arrange an interpreting service over the phone. We can usually do this straightaway. If this is not possible, or if it suits you better we can also arrange a face-to-face interpreter. The interview will take place as soon as possible.

Responsibilities

What we will do for you

We will:

- treat you with respect and be polite and helpful in all our dealings with you;
- treat you fairly and in line with current law, whatever your religious belief, sex, political opinion, race, age, marital status or sexuality, and whether you have a disability or any dependants;
- have staff who are fully trained to carry out their duties quickly and effectively;
- keep any information you give us confidential and only pass on information where necessary;
- provide a face-to-face service in our offices which will have open-plan modern facilities that provide a welcoming and pleasant environment;
- provide suitable and comfortable facilities in medical examination centres; and
- respect your privacy and arrange for a private interview if you want one.

What we ask of you

In return, we would ask you to:

- look positively at your options for work;
- be on time for appointments;
- be polite and considerate to our staff;
- be polite and considerate to other customers;
- give us relevant information when we ask you, including information about our services or suggestions for improvement; and
- tell us immediately about changes in your circumstances and changes in the circumstances of anyone you are claiming for.

We will not tolerate violent or abusive behaviour towards our staff or our property.

Decision making

If you think a decision on your claim is wrong:

- you can ask us to look at the decision again; and
- you may be able to appeal to an independent tribunal. The letter telling you about our decision will tell you if you can appeal.

If you want us to look at the decision again, you need to contact the office that is dealing with your claim. You must do this within one month of the date of the letter giving you the decision. You can get more information in the leaflet **GL24, 'If you think our decision is wrong'**, which you can get from any of our offices or from the 'leaflets' section at www.dsdni.gov.uk

Complaints

If you have a complaint about something that has gone wrong, we want to know so that we can try to put it right.





Our complaints procedure is easy to use. You can make a complaint in the way that suits you, including:

- by phone or fax;
- by visiting the office;
- in writing; or
- by e-mail.

If you complain, we:

- will acknowledge your complaint within two working days;
- aim to reply within 10 working days; and
- will try to learn from your complaint to improve our service.

You can get more information about how to complain from our leaflet called **'Making a comment or complaint'**. You can get this from any of our offices or from the 'leaflets' section at www.dsdni.gov.uk or 'publications' section at www.delni.gov.uk

Our targets and performance

We have targets for the number of people we help to find jobs during the year, and targets to deal with claims and to pay benefit. We will publish our targets. You can find out if we are meeting our targets each year in our annual reports. Each office also has information about its performance.

More about the charter

We published this charter in September 2004 and we will review it regularly. You can also get a copy in Braille, on audiotape or in other languages. You can ask for these at any of our offices.



Department for
**Social
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www.dsdni.gov.uk



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and Learning**
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