

**BROADCASTING COMMISSION OF
IRELAND**

**QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE
CHARTER**

September 2005

Our Mission

The Mission of the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland is:

The BCI will stimulate the development of an excellent indigenous broadcast industry that meets the diverse entertainment, education and information needs of the people of Ireland, while making effective use of a national resource.

Our Values

The following values underpin the delivery of services by the Commission:

Openness & Transparency (Accountability)

The Commission recognises the importance of establishing and implementing processes for all its activities which are clear, simple to understand and open to scrutiny by all stakeholders. In addition, the Commission is committed to providing comprehensive information to all stakeholders, in a timely fashion, on its activities while respecting the privacy of individuals and the sensitive nature of some information.

Fairness

The Commission will at all times be fair and reasonable in its practices, processes and procedures in its various roles as a regulator, an employer and a representative of the public interest. It will be even-handed in its dealings and will balance the different aspects of its remit. The Commission understands that this is an ongoing process. It will explore new ways of reflecting fairness and enhancing it within the Commission culture, while continuing its commitment to equality of access and opportunity among staff, stakeholders and the general public.

Consistency & Flexibility

The Commission will be consistent in the application of its practices, processes and procedures to ensure a degree of certainty for both listeners/viewers, as well as broadcasters. However, the Commission will use its discretion to be sufficiently flexible to respond to changing market conditions, as well as the evolving interests and needs of the audiences being served.

People

The Commission values people within the organisation and their ability to deliver the best possible standards of service delivery to our stakeholders. People are the cornerstone to the effective working of the organisation. The following are key to the implementation of this value:

Clarity of Objectives

Individuals within the organisation are clear about what is expected of them within their work. Staff will be supportive of the Commission's organisational objectives and the vision for their achievement.

Managing Performance

Staff members' contribution to the organisation will be supported and enhanced through effective performance management. This provides the opportunity to review performance, provide regular two-way feedback, and assess resource and training needs.

Communication

Communication is essential both between the Board and the Executive of the Commission and externally. Good communication ensures a better flow and working pattern between the different sections of the organisation.

Structure

An appropriate structure, facilitating cross-functionality and team work is key to harnessing the expertise which exists in the organisation.

Quality

Quality is an integral aspect of the way the Commission works. It is evident in the standard of documentation issuing from the organisation – both content and form. It is evident from how callers, the public and visitors are dealt with. Quality also refers to the standard of our processes, procedures and decision making.

Innovation

Innovation in the Commission is defined by a hunger to try new things, new ways of doing old things and a willingness and courage to experiment. Continuing to support innovation in the Commission will be important to the continued development of an innovative culture in the organisation.

Excellence

Excellence denotes setting high standards and aspiring towards them. It involves having a culture of excellence within the organisation that people have bought into and are willing to support.

Efficiency and effectiveness

Efficiency is doing things right. Effectiveness is doing the right thing. Effectiveness can also relate to the ability of the organisation to have influence. The Commission wishes to continue to be both efficient and effective.

Respected

If the decision-making policies are open and transparent, fair and reasonable, then as an organisation the Commission may be respected. Even so, we expect some level of criticism. This type of criticism is important. The Commission wants to be respected but recognises that we may not always be liked, given our role. The Commission will not be influenced by our perception of the industry or individuals involved.

Loyalty

The Board and staff of the Commission are expected and encouraged to articulate an opinion or viewpoint on topics where the individual has particular expertise and/or responsibility. Loyalty to the organisation signifies respect for the organisation by supporting its policy objectives and the implementation of all decisions both internally and externally, when the decision has been made.

Our Functions

The Commission is responsible for a number of key areas of activity with regard to television and radio services in Ireland further to the provisions of the Radio and Television Act 1988, the Broadcasting Act 2001 and the Broadcasting (Funding) Act 2003. They include:

Licensing

The Commission licenses independent broadcasting services aiming to provide listener choice and diversity. This includes the licensing of a national television programme service (TV3), a national radio service (Today FM) and a total of 48 regional, local, community, community of interest and institutional radio services. The Commission is also responsible for the licensing of additional television services on digital cable, MMD and satellite.

Monitoring

The Commission monitors all of the above services to ensure that license holders comply with their statutory obligations as well as the terms of their contracts. Monitoring includes the assessment of programme performance, ownership and control structures, financial and trading performance, human resource management practices and transmission and studio facilities.

Codes and Rules

The Commission is responsible for the development of codes and rules in relation to programming and advertising standards. When introduced, these codes will apply to all broadcasters, both public, private and community.

Development

The Commission provides support for training and development initiatives, in an effort to promote a culture of excellence in the independent broadcasting sector. The Commission also supports programming initiatives such as the New Adventures in Broadcasting scheme.

Research

The Commission undertakes and/or commissions research to assist the development of broadcast policy in Ireland, in the context of technological change, changes in EU legislation, new programming formats and international trends and experiences.

Information

Through its information function, the Commission publishes and disseminates information to those working in the broadcasting sector as well as to the general public.

Broadcasting Funding Scheme

The Commission is also responsible for the development and administration of funding scheme(s) to support new television and radio programmes.

Our Customers

The Commission interacts with a wide range of external stakeholders (our Customers) among whom are: the public, radio and television listeners and viewers, licensees and license applicants, applicants for and recipients of grants, awards and funding, representative bodies for the broadcasting industry, non governmental representative groups, agencies and bodies, statutory regulators and other statutory agencies, the government, government departments and agencies, the media.

We also have our internal customers; our staff and Board Members, through whom we seek to deliver a quality service to our external customers. We recognise that we can only meet our commitments to providing quality customer services if we ourselves meet the needs of our staff in key areas such as: Training and Development, Information and Communications, Consultation and Technology. The staff of the Commission have a vital role in the delivery of quality services to our external customers.

Our Commitment

Our commitment to providing a quality customer service is set out in our Strategic Plan 2004-2008. This commitment is further established in the various actions outlined in the Plan.

The Commission is committed to delivering an efficient, courteous and quality service to its customers.

The Commission will treat all its customers equally ensuring that 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.

The Commission will be sensitive to its customers needs and take into account their age, their capacity to understand often complex rules and procedures and any disability they may have.

The Commission will work to eliminate barriers to access to its services, however they arise.

Contacting the Commission

Telephone

When you telephone us, we will:

- Be available to answer your calls during normal office hours (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday, with an answering machine available to take a message outside of these hours).
- Provide direct dial access to staff members.
- Answer all calls promptly and courteously.
- Identify ourselves and our area of work.
- Be helpful and provide you with clear and accurate information.
- Connect you with the person sought or to a person who can best deal with your enquiry.
- Take details and call you back at an agreed time if we cannot provide an immediate answer to your query.
- If it is necessary to transfer your call to another area of the Commission, give you the name and section of the person to whom you are being transferred.
- Not put you on hold without explanation, or keep you on hold without regular updates.
- Take a message if necessary and ensure that your call is returned.
- Keep internal telephone directories and organisation charts up-to-date.

Note:

Please note that staff members will not be required to accept offensive or abusive behaviour over the telephone.

Correspondence

In corresponding with you we will:

- Acknowledge all written enquiries (by post, fax or email) promptly; a substantive reply will be sent within a maximum of fifteen working days or, if more time is needed, inform you and give an indication as to how long you can expect to receive a full reply.
- Use clear and simple language and keep technical/official terms and acronyms to a minimum.
- Provide you with a contact name, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.
- Send any correspondence received by us which is a matter for another Department or Agency to them immediately, and notify you of this course of action.

Note:

Please note that these commitments cannot be taken to apply to correspondence received during organised "write-in" campaigns.

Visits to our offices

If you visit our office, we will:

- Be available to meet with you, by appointment, during normal office hours (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday to Friday). We will try to be flexible if you need to have an appointment scheduled outside these hours.
- Meet with you punctually, where you have an appointment.
- Do our best to accommodate you, where you do not have an appointment.
- Receive you courteously and be helpful to you.
- Deal with your enquiry as soon as possible. If, however, we are unable to deal with your enquiry we will inform you of this and redirect you to someone who can.
- Ensure that our offices are accessible and clean, and that they comply with occupational and safety standards.
- Ensure that you can conduct your business with us in an appropriate environment of privacy and confidentiality.
- Continuously review access to our offices for all customers, including those with disabilities and specific needs.

Note:

Please note that staff members will not be required to accept offensive or abusive behaviour.

Provision of information, forms, leaflets, etc.

With regard to forms, leaflets, reports, publications and the provision of information, we will:

- Ensure that all generally available information is accessible in both electronic and printed formats and, on request and to the best of our ability, in a manner which addresses any special needs customers may have.
- Provide helpful and accurate information, using clear and simple language, that is relevant to your enquiry.
- Review all information on a regular basis to ensure that legislative and procedural changes are taken into account.
- Drive to simplify and regularly review rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures with a view to simplification where possible.
- Supply prospective applicants under a service or scheme provided or administered by us with eligibility criteria and general information on that service or scheme.
- Explain exactly what is required in application forms and only ask relevant questions.
- Provide responses to enquiries that are appropriate, thorough, substantive and clearly expressed.

Accessing our Services

Accessibility

The Commission provides the services identified above in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

To assist you in accessing our services we will:

- Ensure that all of our services are accessible to the widest possible number of customers, including those with disabilities and specific needs.
- Ensure that all of our services are advertised in such a manner that ensures the widest possible audience.
- Provide where possible a choice in delivery mechanisms, including payment methods.
- Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice and quality of delivery.

- Provide information and services through Irish and/or bilingually where requested.
- Make decisions as quickly as possible and always within any relevant prescribed timeframes, and give our reasons for them. Where there is recourse to an appeal process, you will be so notified and advised how to make such an appeal
- Provide a coordinated and integrated approach to the delivery of our services.
- Provide and advertise an appeals mechanism where relevant.

Consultation and Evaluation

The Commission regularly reviews its service delivery, its policies and its codes and rules. The Commission also introduces new policies, codes and rules from time to time.

When introducing new or reviewing existing policies, procedures, codes and rules we will:

- Consult with a wide an audience as possible.
- Develop consultation mechanisms to suit each process.
- Take appropriate account of any submissions made.
- Ensure that meaningful evaluations are made.

Confidentiality

The Commission will have appropriate regard for the confidentiality of information relating to other persons or organisations, subject to the limitations imposed by the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 (as amended), the co-operation agreement between the BCI and the Competition Authority and any requirements imposed by legislation pertaining to the BCI.

Website

The Commission's website will be regularly updated with relevant information.

Freedom of Information

The Commission will apply the spirit of the Freedom of Information Act as well as the specific requirements. Personal information will only be issued with the consent of the individual. Information covered by the Act will be issued as quickly as possible and in every event within the time limits established by the Act.

Response from Customers

Customer feedback

We regard feedback as the key to understanding the needs and expectations of our customers. To this end, we will provide various mechanisms - both formal and informal - to ensure that your views and/or comments are communicated to us.

As regards formal consultation, we will:

- Provide a facility on our website whereby customers can provide feedback.
- Engage in consultation with customers on quality of service and policy issues appropriate to the various functions and customer groups of the Commission.
- Consult regularly with staff and encourage internal debate on Quality Customer Service.

As regards informal consultation, we will:

- Encourage all staff to use their day-to-day contact with customers as a means of gathering feedback on quality of service provided.
- Ensure that appropriate channels are in place for staff to feed customer comments to the Commission's management.

Finally, we would encourage all our customers to provide us with feedback wherever possible, including positive feedback, even if we don't specifically request it. All comments regarding the quality of service provided by the Commission are warmly welcomed and will be acknowledged. You can e-mail us at info@bci.ie.

Help us to help you

To assist us in reaching these standards, we would be grateful if you could:

- Ensure that all application forms are fully, accurately and legibly completed, include any necessary supporting documentation and return by the specified closing date (where applicable).
- Make an appointment in advance, if you intend visiting the Commission, in order to ensure that the appropriate officials are available and any necessary advance preparations for the meeting can be carried out.

Complaints

While we make every effort to deliver our services in a manner that renders complaints unnecessary, we accept that promised standards of service may not always be met and that mistakes can be made. All types of customer feedback, including complaints, are very useful to us in helping to improve the quality of our services.

You have a right to complain if:

- The standard of service you have received from the Commission is not on a par with that offered in this document.

In the event that it is not possible to resolve a complaint with the staff member or section with whom you have been dealing, you can address your complaint to:

Director of Corporate Services
Broadcasting Commission of Ireland
2-5 Warrington Place
Dublin 2

Phone: (+353 1) 644-1200
Fax: (+353 1) 676-0948
E-Mail: info@bci.ie

Any complaint regarding the services of the Commission will be acknowledged and investigated as a matter of priority with a view to issuing a prompt response.