



## **Irish Prison Service Stakeholder Service Charter Action Plan**

### **Introduction**

The delivery of effective and quality service is a priority for the Irish Prison Service and forms an integral part of our overall Strategic Plan (2019-2022). The purpose of this Action Plan and the Stakeholder Charter that accompanies it, is to set out in how we aim to provide the highest level of service to our stakeholders.

### **The role of the Irish Prison Service**

The Irish Prison Service's mission is to provide safe and secure custody, dignity of care and rehabilitation to prisoners for safer communities. Our vision for a safer community is realised through excellence in a Prison Service that is built on respect for human dignity is achieved through working in partnership with all levels of government, funded services, communities and individuals. Our work is underpinned by high standards in accountability and support to all those we serve.

The Irish Prison Service interacts with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders including the Department of Justice, the Department of Health, EuroPris, families of people in our custody, victims of crime, and many advocacy groups and regulatory bodies.

### **Quality Customer Service Initiative ("QCS")**

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform ("DPER") developed a Quality Customer Service Initiative whereby public service organisations must ensure that they are providing the highest level of service to all of its customers in accordance with 12 principles of quality customer service. The Irish Prison Service is wholly committed to providing this high standard level of service and to following the principles:

### **12 Principles of Quality Customer Service (As published by DPER, 2000)**

#### **1. Quality Service Standards**

Publish a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which the customer can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

#### **2. Equality/Diversity**

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

#### **3. Physical Access**

Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services. Provide clean, accessible public offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational



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and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

### **4. Information**

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate; that is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by information technology is fully availed of and that the information available on public service websites follows the guidelines on web publication. Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

### **5. Timeliness & Courtesy**

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

### **6. Complaints**

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

### **7. Appeals**

Similarly, maintain a formalized, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

### **8. Consultation & Evaluation**

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

### **9. Choice**

Provide choice, where feasible, in service delivery including payment methods, location of contact points, opening hours and delivery times. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

### **10. Official Languages Equality**

Provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and inform customers of their right to choose to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

### **11. Better Co-ordination**

Foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivery of public services.

### **12. Internal Customer**

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

These principles are reflected in our Stakeholder Service Charter.



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### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Irish Prison Service uses a range of mechanisms to measure and evaluate our performance against the standards set out in our Stakeholder Service Charter and Action Plan, to ensure that we continue to deliver the highest levels of service to our stakeholders. In monitoring our performance, we will:

- Benchmark our performance against previous results
- Use internal information management systems to inform our service delivery policies
- Comply with all applicable health and safety standards and regulations and carry out safety audits and disability audits

Our Stakeholder Charter outlines in broad terms the level of service all of our stakeholders are entitled to expect. To enable us to meet the commitments we will aim to evaluate the performance of its our service based on the following indicators:

#### Quality Service

- Keep all stakeholders fully informed of the standards of service they can expect to receive from us.
- Make easily available, copies of the Stakeholder Service Charter and Action Plan to those who wish to have a copy.

#### Equality / Diversity/Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

- Maintain a focus on equality, inclusion and diversity issues throughout the Irish Prison Service
- Treat all people equally, in accordance with relevant legislation.

#### Physical Access

- Allow easy and full access, where authorised, to our buildings for those people with disabilities and/or specific needs.
- Keep our buildings clean, comfortable and compliant with health and safety standards and regulations.

#### Information

- Provide clear, timely and accurate information which is accessible for people with specific needs.
- Publish useful and relevant information on our website, in line with guidelines in terms of accessibility and official languages equality.
- Keep information distribution channels as up-to-date as possible and maintain pace with the most recent technological developments and innovations in media and communications.
- Make every effort to ensure that information is made available in as many different formats as is practicable.



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### **Timeliness & Courtesy**

- Treat people with courtesy and endeavour to handle all enquiries as promptly and as efficiently as possible.
- Staff to provide names when taking calls with people.
- Respond to voicemails promptly.
- Provide full contact details on all written or email communications from the Irish Prison Service.

### **Complaints**

- Treat complaints promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence.
- Acknowledge all complaints.
- Fully investigate all complaints where possible and provide a prompt reply to the complainant.
- Allocate all complaints to the appropriate administrative channel.
- Where this is not possible, an interim reply will be given, explaining the reason for the delay and advising when a substantive response will issue.
- Should the complainant so require, keep details of the complainant private.

### **Choice**

- Keep multiple contact options open for stakeholders including telephone numbers, e-mail and website addresses.
- Embrace innovation to ensure that the Irish Prison Service makes full use of new and emerging technologies to broaden the choice of services available to our stakeholders.

### **Official Languages Equality**

- Where possible, the Irish Prison Service will attempt to provide staff who can cater for callers who may wish to be dealt with through Irish via telephone. This may not always be possible however we will ensure that any written request received in Irish is responded to in Irish.
- Make available key documents published by the Irish Prison Service such as the Annual Report and key in both Irish and English, as required by the Official Languages Act 2003.

### **Better Co-ordination**

- Maintain co-ordination across Directorates and the Prison Estate within the Irish Prison Service to improve co-ordination on service provision and delivery.

### **Internal Customer**

- Develop more effective internal channels of communication to allow staff to gain a fuller understanding of all aspects of the role of the Irish Prison Service.

### **Training**

- We recognise that in order for staff to provide a quality service they must be familiar with the policies and practices outlined in the Stakeholder Action Plan and with the commitments given in our Stakeholder Service Charter.



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- We are committed to investing in appropriate training for staff and to do regular refresher training where necessary, particularly for those members of staff in regular contact with members of the public.

### **Statutory Obligations**

- In addition to undertakings given in this Action Plan and the Stakeholder Service Charter, we believe it is important that all staff of the Irish Prison Service are aware of their statutory obligations.
- The Irish Prison Service is committed to fulfilling all relevant obligations some of which relate to data protection, equality, freedom of information, prompt payment of accounts and safety, health and welfare at work. This list is not exhaustive and the Irish Prison Service seeks to regularly check its compliance within its legislative and regulatory framework.

## **HOW TO CONTACT US**

The Irish Prison Service is not a public office. We encourage stakeholders to contact us via email. Meeting requests are via appointment only.

Address for correspondence:

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IDA Business Park,  
Ballinalee Rd.,  
Longford,  
N39 A308

Website URL: [www.irishprisons.ie](http://www.irishprisons.ie)

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September 2021