



THE LABOUR COURT
An Chúirt Oibreachais

Customer Charter and Action Plan
2022-2024

September 2022

Contents

Section 1 – Customer Charter	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Our Customer Charter.....	3
1.3 Our Commitments and Standards	3
1.4 Limitations.....	4
1.5 Internal customer.....	5
1.6 Customer responsibilities.....	5
1.7 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting	5
1.8 Comments and Queries	5
Section 2 - Customer Service Action Plan	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Principles of Quality Customer Service	6
2.3 Our commitment to our customers	6

Section 1 – Customer Charter

1.1 Introduction

The mission statement of the Labour Court is "To provide high quality, fair and impartial arrangements for the resolution of industrial disputes and the determination of appeals in disputes based on employment law".

The Labour Court was established under the Industrial Relations Act, 1946, to exercise the functions assigned to it by that Act. The functions of the Court have been altered and extended by subsequent legislation including the Workplace Relations Act 2015. Under the provisions of the Act, the Labour Court now has sole appellate jurisdiction in all disputes under employment rights enactments.

The Court operates in two modes - as an industrial relations tribunal, and as the appellate Court for decisions made by Adjudication Officers of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) under the range of employment rights enactments.

When exercising its jurisdiction as an industrial relations tribunal the Court hears both sides in a case and then issues a Recommendation setting out its opinion on the merits of the dispute and the terms upon which it should be settled.

Such recommendations made by the Court are not binding on the parties concerned. However, the parties are expected to give serious consideration to the Court's Recommendation. Ultimately, however, responsibility for the settlement of a dispute rests with the parties.

Since the commencement of the Workplace Relations Act 2015, the Court has been the sole appellate Court for decisions made by Adjudication Officers of the WRC under the wide body of employment rights legislation. The Court's decisions made under employment rights enactments are legally binding. Such decisions may be appealed to the High Court on a point of law only.

Full details are available on at www.labourcourt.ie

1.2 Our Customer Charter

In carrying out its functions the Labour Court is committed to treating all our customers equally and to delivering the highest quality of customer service. The Labour Court will always respect the rights of all parties in the delivery of service.

This Charter sets out the level of service which you can expect to receive if you have recourse to the Labour Court. It does not cover in detail all the functions and services of the Court but outlines our commitment to you.

We aim for a relationship with our customers that is characterised by courtesy and respect, together with efficient and effective service delivery and the minimum of delay.

1.3 Our Commitments and Standards

When you contact us by phone, letter or email

- Professional and courteous staff will identify themselves and provide appropriate contact details or any further communication.
- Your phone call will be answered promptly and a response will be provided to voicemail messages within 1 working day of receipt where possible.

- We will acknowledge your written enquiries (including email) within 5 working days and will issue a response within 15 working days; we will keep you informed of progress if a final reply is not issued within 15 working days.

When you visit our website

- We will seek to ensure information is up-to-date, clear, accurate, comprehensive and accessible.

Equality and accessibility

We are committed to providing a service to customers that upholds their right to equal treatment established by equality and disability legislation. If you have specific requirements, please advise the Labour Court as soon as possible.

Seirbhís i nGaeilge

Deanfaidh an Chúirt Oibreachais gach iarracht chun freastal ar dhaoine as mian leo gnó a dhéanamh trí mhéan na Gaeilge.

Hearing your case

- The Court will conduct the hearing to the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour in an effort to ensure that, with the support of the parties through their own behaviour, the hearing takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy.
- The Court will ensure that all parties will have an equal opportunity to present their case.
- Hearings relating to industrial relations cases are held in private, while hearings relating to employment rights cases are, subject to certain exceptions, held in public.
- The Court will act fairly and impartially in hearing and determining all issues of fact and law that fall for consideration by the Court.
- We will arrange for an interpreter to attend the hearing if requested.
- The Court members are not advocates for either side. However, in an appeal made under an employment rights enactment, where one party is unrepresented, the Court may make appropriate allowances during the hearing. Any such accommodation will be provided within the limits of the Court's obligations to conduct a fair hearing.
- After the hearing, the Court will issue a written Recommendation/Decision/Determination.
- The Court will not comment, advise or provide further material on Recommendations/Decisions/Determinations that have been issued. In certain circumstances the Court may, if requested, clarify an element of an industrial relations recommendation.
- After the Recommendation/Decision/Determination has issued to both parties it will be published on the Labour Court website www.labourcourt.ie

1.4 Limitations

While we will provide general information on the nature of the services available from the Court, we cannot provide legal advice or advise on the merits of a potential case in advance of a hearing by the Court.

1.5 Internal customer

The Labour Court recognises staff as internal customers and ensures they are properly supported and consulted regarding service delivery issues.

1.6 Customer responsibilities

To assist us in reaching our service standard, we ask that you:

- Provide any information, including reference numbers that are relevant to your query.
- Ensure that all forms are completed as accurately as possible.
- Provide all necessary supporting documentation.
- Respond to requests for additional information as promptly as possible.
- Follow the Labour Court Rules 2022 and any instructions issued.
- Treat our staff with courtesy and respect.

1.7 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

We will measure and evaluate our performance against our commitments in the Charter and will report on these each year in our Annual Report.

1.8 Comments and Queries

We welcome customer feedback on our services and invite customers to contact us with any feedback they may have.

Contact us by email at info@labourcourt.ie

If you are unhappy with the quality of the service you receive from us you have the right to complain. All complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly and impartially in line with our procedures for dealing with customer complaints.

Please see our Complaints Procedures at <https://www.labourcourt.ie/en/publications/customer-charter/>.

Please note that publication of this Customer Charter is not intended to create new legal rights for customers.

Section 2 - Customer Service Action Plan

2.1 Introduction

The Labour Court is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all of its customers. Our Customer Action Plan 2022-2024 describes how the commitments and standards set out in our Customer Charter 2022-2024 will be delivered by the Labour Court in accordance with the guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service (QCS).

Our targets, as set out in this Customer Service Action Plan, **do not create any legal rights for customers.**

2.2 Principles of Quality Customer Service

The Labour Court is committed to providing the highest levels of service to all our customers in accordance with the 12 Guiding Principles for QCS:

1. Quality Service Standards

2. Equality/Diversity

3. Physical Access

4. Information

5. Timeliness and Courtesy

6. Complaints

7. Appeals

8. Consultation and Evaluation

9. Choice

10. Official Languages Equality

11. Better Co-ordination

12. Internal Customer

The manner in which the Labour Court will honour these principles is set out in our **Customer Charter** (Section 1).

2.3 Our commitment to our customers

The Labour Court is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all of its customers. This Customer Action Plan provides further details of how the commitments and standards outlined in our Customer Charter will be delivered by the Labour Court in accordance with the guiding Principles of Quality Customer Service (QCS) which have been adopted across the public service.

1. Quality Service Standards

We will ensure that our Customer Charter, Customer Service Action Plan and Complaints Procedure are available on our website.

2. Equality/Diversity

We will ensure that:

- a focus on equality/diversity is maintained in the Labour Court;
- all customers are treated equally and in accordance with relevant legislation;
- appropriate interpretation services, including sign language, are provided to meet customer needs at hearings, when required.

3. Physical Access

We will aim to ensure that our services, facilities and venues for hearings in Dublin and at regional locations are accessible to all our customers. In addition, we will continue to enhance accessibility using technology where appropriate, building on remote capacity developed in 2020 and 2021.

4. Information

We will aim to ensure that:

- all information provided by the Labour Court is clear, timely, accurate and accessible to our customers;
- as much of this information is published on our website as possible;
- our website will be kept under review
- guidance on accessing our services will be accessible and up-to-date
- our website conforms to web accessibility guidelines.

5. Timeliness and Courtesy

We will aim to ensure that:

- all customers are treated with courtesy and that all enquiries are dealt with promptly and efficiently;
- all staff provide their name when answering telephone calls;
- voicemail recordings are updated as necessary and that all voicemail messages are responded to within 1 working day of receipt.

6. Complaints

We have a clear complaints procedure in place and this will be available on our website.

We will aim to:

- investigate complaints made about the quality of customer service provided promptly, fairly and impartially and respond to complainants within the timeframes specified;
- review customer feedback from the operation of our complaint procedures with a view to further improving service delivery.

7. Appeals

We will make customers aware of the review process, where a decision is made relating to the quality of service provided by the Labour Court.

8. Consultation and Evaluation

Customers are welcome to submit views and comments to info@labourcourt.ie

We will aim to:

- review customer feedback with a view to further improving service delivery;
- ensure the levels of service provision and delivery by the Labour Court are evaluated on a regular basis.

9. Choice

We will aim to:

- provide a range of appropriate contact channels, for example, email and through our website www.labourcourt.ie;
- continue to provide information online and through appropriate channels;
- seek to progress and broaden the range of services available to customers online.

10. Official Languages Equality

We will aim to:

- comply with our obligations under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021;
- publish major publications such as the Labour Court's Annual Report in Irish and English;
- make available main pages of our website www.labourcourt.ie in both Irish and English;
- reply in Irish to all correspondence received in Irish;
- continue to cooperate with DETE's support to staff to learn Irish and/improve their Irish language skills.

11. Better Co-ordination

We will aim to participate in inter Departmental and cross Governmental fora, such as the Quality Customer Service (QCS) Network, in order to ensure that our approach to service delivery is consistent with best practice across the Public Service.

12. Internal Customers

We will aim to:

- keep staff informed of developments in the Labour Court and Department, where appropriate, through use of relevant channels of communication including the DETE intranet;
- consider the development of new approaches, including e-delivery methods, to provide for high quality training and development of staff;
- offer training in customer service and other related training to staff who are in regular contact with members of the public.