THE LABOUR COURT
An Chúirt Oibreachais

# Customer Charter and Action Plan

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# Section 1 – Customer Charter

## 1.1 Introduction

The mission 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. The Court operates 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 is 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/determinations made under employment rights enactments are legally binding. Such decisions/determinations may be appealed to the High Court on a point of law only. Full details are available on at www.labourcourt.ie

The Labour Court operates as an independent industrial relations tribunal and is the sole appellate body for employment rights cases.

This Customer Charter reflects the Labour Court's commitment to delivering a modern, high-quality, accessible and user-centred service. It is aligned with the Labour Court Strategic Plan 2025–2027, which emphasises efficiency, accessibility, digital transformation, and excellence in service delivery.

The Charter also reflects the Labour Court's obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (Public Sector Duty), ensuring that equality, human rights, dignity and respect are embedded across all services.

## 1.2 Our Customer Charter

In carrying out its functions, the Labour Court is committed to:

- Treating all customers with dignity, fairness and respect
- Ensuring equality of access and non-discrimination

- Providing clear, accessible and timely information
- Delivering services in a professional, impartial and transparent manner
- Continuously improving services in line with best practice across the public service

This Charter sets out the level of service you can expect when engaging with the Labour Court.

## 1.3 Our Commitments and Standards

### When you contact us (phone, email, correspondence):

- Staff will be professional, courteous and helpful
- Phone calls will be answered promptly where possible
- Voicemail messages will be returned within 1 working day
- Written enquiries will be acknowledged within 5 working days
- A response will issue within 15 working days, or you will be updated on progress

### Information and Website

- Information will be clear, accurate, accessible and up-to-date
- Guidance on accessing services will be available and easy to understand

### Equality, Accessibility and Participation

We are committed to ensuring that all users can access and participate fully in our services, regardless of disability, language ability, literacy level or other protected characteristics.

We will:

- Provide interpreter services (including ISL where required)
- Support reasonable accommodations through our Access Officer
- Communicate in plain English and accessible formats where possible

### Hearing your case

- Hearings will be conducted in a fair, impartial and mutually respectful manner in line with fair procedures and the Court's statutory remit.
- 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.
- The Court is independent and 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. We will arrange for an interpreter to attend the hearing if requested.

- Participants and their representatives are required to present and conduct themselves in a manner suitable to a courtroom setting at both physical and virtual hearings.
- Decisions/Recommendations/Determinations will be issued in writing and published on the Court website
- The Court will not provide further comment or advise on Recommendations / Decisions / Determinations that have issued.

Seirbhís i nGaeilge

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

## 1.4 Equality and Human Rights

In accordance with our Public Sector Duty obligations, the Labour Court is committed to promoting equality, preventing discrimination, protecting the human rights of service users and staff

This includes:

- Ensuring respectful and dignified treatment in all interactions
- Supporting accessibility and inclusion
- Providing equal opportunities to participate in hearings and processes
- Enhancing communication supports where required

## 1.5 Limitations

While the Labour Court will provide information on the services available from the Court, it cannot provide legal advice, advise on the merits of a case or comment on decisions/determinations once issued or review matters relating to the conduct of hearings through its customer service procedures.

## 1.6 Internal Customers

The Labour Court recognises its staff as internal customers and is committed to:

- Providing a professional and inclusive work environment
- Facilitating training and development opportunities
- Ensuring dignity and respect in the workplace

### 1.7 Customer Responsibilities

To assist us in delivering our service, we ask customers to:

- Provide accurate and relevant information
- Complete forms fully and correctly
- Supply supporting documents where required
- Follow current Labour Court Rules and any instructions issued
- Treat Labour Court staff with courtesy and respect

### 1.8 Monitoring and Feedback

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 customer service you receive from us you have the right to make a complaint. All complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly and impartially in line with our Customer Complaints Procedure (link below) Matters relating to quasi-judicial decision-making, the conduct of hearings, the exercise of Court's statutory functions, and the outcome of cases fall outside the scope of the Customer Complaints Procedure.

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 2025–2028

### 2.1 Introduction

The Labour Court is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all of its customers. This Customer Service Action Plan sets out how the Labour Court will deliver on its commitments outlined in the Customer Charter 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 the 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service:

| |
|---|
| **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** |

### 1. Quality Service Standards

The Labour Court is committed to delivering services that are efficient, professional and responsive. Clear service standards are set out in this Charter and performance against these standards is monitored.

### 2. Equality / Diversity

The Labour Court will ensure that all customers are treated equally and with respect, regardless of background or personal characteristics. Service delivery will reflect the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination, in line with equality legislation and the Public Sector Duty.

### 3. Physical Access

The Labour Court is committed to providing accessible facilities for all users. This includes ensuring that hearing venues are accessible and supporting participation through reasonable accommodations where required.

### 4. Information

The Labour Court will provide information that is clear, accurate and accessible. Information will be presented in plain English where possible and will support users in understanding Court processes and engaging effectively with services.

### 5. Timeliness and Courtesy

All customers will be treated with courtesy, respect and professionalism. The Court will aim to respond to enquiries promptly and provide services without unnecessary delay.

### 6. Complaints

The Labour Court has a clear complaints procedure in place and this is available on our website. Complaints relating to the quality of customer service will be handled promptly, fairly and impartially, and will be used as an opportunity to improve service delivery. The Complaints Procedure does not apply to decisions/determinations of the Court, the conduct of hearings, or the exercise of statutory functions by Court Members.

### 7. Appeals

The Labour Court will make customers aware of the review process for complaints. Decisions relating to customer service will be open to review in line with established procedures.

### 8. Consultation and Evaluation

The Labour Court values customer feedback and will seek to engage with service users to improve delivery. Feedback will be monitored and used to inform continuous improvement.

### 9. Choice

The Labour Court will provide access to services through a range of appropriate channels, including digital and in-person options where possible. This supports flexibility and accessibility for users.

### 10. Official Languages Equality

The Labour Court will comply with its obligations under the Official Languages (Amendment) Act 2021. Services and communications will be available in Irish and English in accordance with statutory requirements.

### 11. Better Co-ordination

The Labour Court will work with the Department and other public bodies to ensure a consistent and joined-up approach to service delivery. Participation in cross-government initiatives supports best practice.

### 12. Internal Customer

The Labour Court recognises staff as internal customers and is committed to supporting them through training, development and a respectful working environment. This ensures staff are equipped to deliver high-quality services to the public.

## 2.3 Key Actions 2025–2028

### 1. Accessibility and Equality

We will:

- Continue to make improvements in line with our Public Sector Duty
- Continue to provide accessibility supports (interpreters, ISL, communication supports)
- Promote inclusive communication and plain English

### 2. Digital Transformation

We will:

- Expand digital service delivery and online access
- Support virtual and hybrid hearings
- Improve the Labour Court website for usability and accessibility
- Enhance online information and guidance for users

### 3. Customer Experience

We will:

- Improve guidance on processes and participation
- Embed dignity, respect and inclusion across all services
- Ensure consistency in customer service standards

### 4. Staff Development and Support

We will:

- Provide training in customer service, equality and human rights, disability awareness and inclusion
- Support staff development in line with Strategic Plan objectives
- Promote an inclusive, respectful workplace aligned with ED&I policies

### 5. Governance and Continuous Improvement

We will:

- Collect and review user feedback
- Ensure adherence to all relevant statutory, regulatory and Departmental policies, standards and governance frameworks.
- Continuously review and improve services