

Offaly Local Authorities

Customer Charter

Offaly Local Authorities Customer Charter

We are committed to providing a service to all our customers which is courteous, helpful, impartial and timely.

Who we are

Offaly Local Authorities is made up of Offaly County Council and the Municipal Districts of Birr, Edenderry and Tullamore. The Authorities are responsible for providing an extensive range of services which impact directly or indirectly on the well-being of everyone in the county.

Our customers

If our services impact on you in any way or if you have reason to contact us, you are one of our customers.

Our commitment to our customers

Our mission statement, as set out in our **Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019**, is *‘to make Offaly the best place possible to live, work, visit and invest’*. Customer care and social inclusion are among our core values. We have restated our commitment to ensure that all our services are customer and user driven and that we are committed to the principles of equality of access, participation and outcome for all in relation to service delivery.

To achieve these values we are committed to the following general service standards:

- **Courtesy and Consideration**
- **Openness and Impartiality**
- **Access to All**
- **Timeliness**

Service by telephone:

If you contact us by telephone, we will endeavour to:

- answer your call promptly during office hours
- be courteous and identify ourselves and our area of work
- give you as much assistance as reasonably possible and provide you with accurate and clear information
- take your details and return your call if we cannot deal with your enquiry immediately and tell you when you can expect to hear from us again
- ensure that voice mail messages are updated regularly to inform you of the availability of individual staff members and respond to all voice mail messages promptly, no later than three working days

- provide a 24 hour contact service for emergencies i.e. 1890 750 750

Service by correspondence:

If you make enquiries by letter, fax or e-mail, we will endeavour to:

- respond to you in your preferred format (e.g. letter, fax, e-mail or telephone) no later than ten working days from receipt of the enquiry or within twenty working days in the case of an enquiry which is particularly complex
- contact you and tell you when you can expect a full reply if we cannot meet these timeframes
- use clear language as deemed appropriate to the recipient and explain any "unfamiliar" technical terms on request
- ensure that all our correspondence contains a contact name, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address
- ensure that automated email reply is updated regularly by staff to inform you when they are out of the office
- if your correspondence relates to a matter that comes within the remit of another public body, we will direct the correspondence to that body and inform you accordingly

On-line Service:

If you avail of our on-line services, we will endeavour to:

- respond to you in your preferred format (e.g. electronically, letter, fax, e-mail or telephone) no later than ten working days
- ensure that as many of our services as possible are made available on-line
- provide readily available instructions on the use of our on-line services in a clear and concise format
- ensure that all security precautions are adhered to
- ensure that download times are kept as short as possible
- provide a Frequently Asked Questions portal where appropriate
- ensure that links to other web pages and sites are maintained
- extend the use of text/messaging via mobile phone where it is considered feasible, cost effective and convenient

Visits to the Council

If you visit our civic offices, area offices, libraries or any of our facilities, we will endeavour to:

- meet you punctually, if you have an appointment
- do our utmost to accommodate you if you don't have an appointment
- treat you with courtesy, be as helpful as possible and respect your privacy
- aim to make appropriate facilities available to you during office hours
- ensure that our offices comply with occupational health and safety requirements
- facilitate access for people with disabilities, and if we are unable to accommodate you at our offices, we will endeavour to make alternative access arrangements.

Equality and Diversity

We will endeavour to:

- respect the principles of equality, and the diversity of our customers in the delivery of our services;
- recognise our legal obligations under the Equal Status Acts and the Disability Act with regard to the provision of access to our services;
- deliver our services in an impartial manner with respect to our customers;
- provide assistance, where required, for people with disabilities when accessing our services. An Access Officer has been appointed to assist with this and can be contacted by telephone or e-mail accessofficer@offalycoco.ie

Information

We will endeavour to:

- provide an informative usable website which contains up to date information including relevant reports from each of our service areas;
- continue to make information held by Offaly Local Authorities available either routinely or in accordance with relevant statutory provisions;
- strive to make more information available electronically;
- endeavour to provide information in a form that is accessible to persons with disabilities;
- aim to ensure that any events (public meetings, exhibitions etc.) organised by Offaly Local Authorities are accessible to all customers.

Service in Irish

We will endeavour to:

- where possible, facilitate members of the public who wish to conduct their business with us through Irish;
- meet our commitments under the Official Languages Act, 2003;
- make the Customer Charter available in both Irish and English.

Help Us to Help You

You can help us by:

- treating employees of Offaly Local Authorities in a professional, courteous and civil manner at all times as our employees have the same right to expect the same entitlements from you that you expect from them;
- quoting reference numbers when writing to us about an existing correspondence or query;

- providing a daytime telephone number or e-mail address in your correspondence if available;
- letting us know in advance about any special requirements that you may have in accessing our services;
- keeping appointments, providing correct information and treating our staff in the way that you would like to be treated yourself;
- obeying our national and local laws and regulations;
- getting involved and actively participating in consultative processes.

Feedback

This Customer Charter is published to provide information about the standards we aim for in providing our services. You are invited to comment on whether our standards are delivering the level of service you require and whether or not we deal effectively with your enquiries. Your comments are extremely useful to us in determining how we need to develop and improve our services and for updating the contents of this Charter. You can do this by providing comments or suggestions regarding the service you receive to the:

Senior Executive Officer, Corporate Services, Offaly County Council, Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullmaore, Co. Offaly

Tel: 057 93 46800 Fax: 057 93 46868

Email: corpserv@offalycoco.ie Web: <http://www.offaly.ie/>

Measuring and Evaluating Performance:

We will put appropriate mechanisms in place to measure and evaluate performance against the commitments in our Charter. In order to continuously improve our service we will keep our Customer Charter under review. We will use a range of measurements/evaluation tools to measure our performance including:

- feedback and suggestions from our customers on an ongoing basis;
- consulting our customers;
- review and compare Offaly Local Authorities service indicators with the national service indicators;
- Customer Service Complaint Procedure reviews.

Customer Service Complaints

While it is our aim to deliver a high quality service to our customers, we recognise that situations may arise in which a customer is dissatisfied with the quality of service provided. We have therefore drawn up a Customer Service Complaints Procedure set out below.

Mistakes and misunderstandings can usually be sorted out quickly, effectively and informally and accordingly we encourage our customers to raise their concerns initially in the department where they are transacting their business.

Offaly Local Authorities has developed a simple and transparent Customers Complaint Procedure which you may use if you are unhappy with the quality of service afforded to you. This procedure relates to complaints and comments relating directly to the quality of the service provided, for example:

- Complaints about issues such as delays, mistakes, lack of courtesy, etc;
- Instances where you did not receive the quality of service you feel you are entitled to;
- Complaints under Section 39 of the Disability Act 2005 relating to access to our services, buildings or information;
- Complaints about discrimination under the Equal Status Acts 1998 and 2004.

It does not cover complaints or appeals about other activities of the Local Authorities where there are existing statutory mechanisms in place to deal with complaints/appeals e.g. Freedom of Information, complaints provided for in legislation with regard to environmental issues, housing appeals policy that deals with complaints about access to services, etc.

Customer Service Complaints Procedure

We will deal with your complaint in a professional, prompt, impartial and sensitive manner.

Complaints should be made as soon as possible following the incident and must be submitted in writing (fax, letter, or email) to the relevant Head of Section. The following information must be provided in order to help us address or investigate the matter as soon as possible:

- your name and address
- precise details of your complaint
- the name of the office and if appropriate, the official(s) with whom you were dealing
- a day time telephone number, if you are happy for us to contact you by phone

The more details that you provide will help us to speed up the investigation of your complaint. Please note that:

- Anonymous complaints about individual staff members shall not be entertained
- Anonymous complaints about service delivery – it will be a matter for the individual section to determine whether it is appropriate to investigate such complaints.

Following Receipt of a Complaint:

- The complaint will be logged and investigated by the Head of Section in the relevant Department.
- The Head of Section will acknowledge the complainant within five working days.
- The acknowledgement will include a note telling the complainant that as far as possible a response will be issued by the Department within a five-week period. Where a longer period is required the complainant will be informed.
- A copy of the complaint, where appropriate, will also be sent, by the relevant Head of Section, to the individual staff member against whom the complaint is made.
- The complaint shall be examined by the Head of Section in association with the relevant staff member(s), following which an appropriate response will issue to the complainant.

Appeals Process:

- A customer who is not satisfied with the manner in which the complaint has been handled may appeal within ten working days from the date of the response to the Director of Services/Head of Finance for the service area.
- Appeals will be determined following an examination of the matter by the appropriate Director of Services/Head of Finance. Where the Director of Services/Head of Finance for the service area has been involved in the original investigation the appeal shall be dealt with by another member of the Management Team or a member of the Senior Management Group.
- The complainant will be advised of a right to refer the issue to the Office of the Ombudsman, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

Advice Note to Departments Investigating Complaints

Each department is responsible for drafting its own response letter to the complainant. However, the following should be taken into account when drafting a response to the complainant:

- All complaints should be investigated fully in an open and fair manner.
- Anonymous complaints about individual staff members - such complaints will not be entertained.
- Anonymous complaints about service delivery – it will be a matter for the individual section to determine whether it is appropriate to investigate such complaints.
- All policies and procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Role of Corporate Services

Corporate Services will be involved with complaints where:

- Complaints that refer to Corporate Services department.
- A complaint received in Corporate Services but refers to another department will be forwarded to the relevant department to have the matter resolved locally. Corporate Services will also log the complaint and ensure that a response to the Complainant issues.

- Corporate Services will monitor and review the Customer Service Complaints Procedure.
- The customer wishes to appeal the decision of a department relating to a complaint.
- The complaint comes from the Office of the Ombudsman.
- The complaint is made under the Equal Status Act 2000.
- The complaint is made under Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005.

Compliments Relating To Member(s) of Staff within Offaly Local Authorities or To the Quality of Service Delivered

If you wish to compliment or thank a member of staff for their assistance or acknowledge the quality of service delivered, please let us know and we will gladly pass on your comments. You can do this by e-mailing Corporate Services at corpserv@offalycoco.ie or dropping a line to Corporate Services, Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. The compliment will be forwarded to the relevant person.

Appeals against the Outcome of the Complaint

- If you are not satisfied with the response you received to a general complaint you may appeal it to the Director of Services, Corporate Services, Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, County Offaly.

Tel: 057 93 46800

Fax: 057 93 46868

Email: corpserv@offalycoco.ie

- The Office of the Ombudsman provides an independent national service responsible for investigating complaints made about Public Bodies, including Local Authorities. These complaints can be about actions, delays or inactions that adversely affects people. The Office of the Ombudsman may be contacted at: 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01 639 5600

Lo-call: 1890 223030

Fax: (01) 639 5674

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

- The Office of the Ombudsman may also investigate complaints concerning compliance by public bodies and some other bodies with Part 3 of the Disability Act 2005.
- If you are not satisfied with the response you received to a complaint about discrimination under the Equal Status Acts, you may refer the complaint to the Equality Tribunal.

How to contact us

Details about the various ways of contacting us can be found under the *Contact Us* section of our website at <http://www.offaly.ie/>

You may contact us by:

- Calling to our offices between the hours of 9.30am and 4pm, including lunchtime
- Calling to Motor Tax between the hours of 9.30am and 3.30pm, including lunchtime
- Visiting and transacting your business via our website <http://www.offaly.ie/>
- Telephoning between the hours of 9am and 5pm, including lunchtime
- Telephoning our individual sections directly at the phone numbers below
- In the case of emergencies outside of office hours by calling 1890 750 750
- Visiting our library service during the opening hours set out below

Our various sections can be contacted directly at the following phone number:

HEADQUARTERS

Áras an Chontae, Tullamore 057 93 46800

DEPARTMENTS

Arts Office 057 93 57440

Community & Enterprise 057 93 57401

Corporate Services 057 93 57402

Environment 057 93 57403

Finance

- Accounts 057 93 57404

- Agresso Support 057 93 57405

- Housing Loans 057 93 57406

- Payroll 057 93 57407

- Rates 057 93 57408

Housing 057 93 57409

Human Resources 057 93 57410

IS Department 057 93 57411

Motor Taxation 057 93 57413

Planning 057 93 57414

Roads & Infrastructure

- Roads 057 93 57415

- Water Services 057 93 57416

Stores 057 93 25100

AFTER HOURS

Lo Call 1890 750 750

FIRE SERVICE

Fire Station HQ, Tullamore 057 93 21441

LANDFILL

Derryclure Landfill Site 057 93 44186

DOG WARDEN

Dog Pound, Cappincur 057 93 51181

MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS

Tullamore M.D. 057 93 46850/52470

Edenderry M.D. 046 97 31256

Birr M.D. 057 91 24900

AREA OFFICES

Tullamore Area Office 057 93 63708

Birr Area Office 057 91 24900

Ferbane Area Office 0906 454306

Edenderry Area Office 046 9731256

LIBRARIES

Library HQ 057 93 57412

Banagher 057 91 51471

Birr 057 91 20961

Clara 057 93 31389

Daingean 057 93 53005

Edenderry 046 97 31028

Ferbane 0906 454259

Kilcormac 057 91 35086

Tullamore 057 93 46832

Our library service opening hours and contact details are as follows:

Birr Library, Wilmer Road, Birr, Co. Offaly

Phone Number: 057 91 24950

Email address: BirrLibrary@offalycoco.ie

Day	Opening Hours	Times open
Monday	<i>Closed</i>	-
Tuesday	9.30am-5.30pm	8
Wednesday	9.30am-8.00pm	10.5
Thursday	9.30am-5.30pm	8
Friday	9.30am-5.30pm	8
Saturday	9.30am-1.00pm	3.5

Clara Library, Ballycumber Rd, Clara

Phone Number: 057 93 31389

Email address: ClaraLibrary@offalycoco.ie

Day	Opening Hours	Times open
Monday	<i>Closed</i>	-
Tuesday	9.30am – 1.30pm 2.00pm - 5.00pm	7
Wednesday	10.00am-8.00pm	10
Thursday	10.00am – 1.30pm 2.00pm - 5.00pm	6 ½
Friday	10.00am-1.30 pm 2.00pm – 5.00pm	7
Saturday	9.30am-1.00pm	3½

Edenderry Library, J.K.L. Street, Edenderry, Co. Offaly

Phone Number: 046 9731028

Email address: EdenderryLibrary@offalycoco.ie

Day	Opening Hours	Times open
Monday	<i>Closed</i>	-
Tuesday	9.30am-5.30pm	8
Wednesday	9.30am-8.00pm	10½
Thursday	9.30am-5.30pm	8
Friday	9.30am-5.30pm	8
Saturday	9.30am-1.00pm	3½

Banagher Library, Moore's Corner, Banagher, Co. Offaly

Phone Number: 057 91 51471

Email address: Banagherlibrary@offalycoco.ie

Day	Opening Hours	Times open
Monday	My Open Library	10am – 8 p.m.
Tuesday	10.00am – 1.00 pm 2.00pm - 5:00pm	6
Wednesday	My Open Library	10am – 8 p.m.
Thursday	2:00pm - 5:00pm 6:00pm - 8:00pm	5
Friday	My Open Library	10am – 8 p.m.
Saturday	10:00am - 1:00pm	4
Sunday	My Open Library	10am – 8 p.m.

Kilcormac Library, Main Street, Kilcormac, Co. Offaly

Phone Number: 057 91 35086

Email address: kilcormaclibrary@offalycoco.ie

Day	Opening Hours	Times open
Monday	Closed	
Tuesday	Closed	
Wednesday	1.30pm – 5pm 6.00pm – 8.00pm	5½
Thursday	Closed	
Friday	Closed	
Saturday	Closed	

Daingean Library, Main Street, Daingean, Co Offaly

Phone Number: 057 93 53005

Email address: daingeanlibrary@offalycoco.ie

Day	Opening Hours	Times open
Monday	Closed	
Tuesday	Closed	
Wednesday	1:30pm - 5:00pm 6:00pm - 8:00pm	6
Thursday	Closed	
Friday	Closed	
Saturday	Closed	

Ferbane Library, Ferbane, Co Offaly

Phone Number: 090 64 54259

Email address: ferbanelibrary@offalycoco.ie

Day	Opening Hours	Times open
Monday	Closed	
Tuesday	Closed	
Wednesday	Closed	
Thursday	1:00pm -5:30pm 6:00pm - 8:00pm	5
Friday	10.00am – 1.30pm 2:00pm -5:00pm	
Saturday	10:00am - 1:00pm	