

# VALUATION OFFICE

## QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

### ACTION PLAN 2010 - 2012

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Foreword by the Commissioner of Valuation	2
Introduction	3
Customer Service Action Plan	4
Provision of Information	5
Consultation with Customers	7
Public Office Standards of Service	8
Staff Consultation and Training	9
Communication with Customers	9
Service Delivery Timeframes	12
Equality of Treatment	13
Complaints & Compliments	14
Who to contact for Rateable Valuation queries	15
Who to contact for Valuation Appeal queries	16
Who to contact for Revaluation queries	16
Who to contact for Special Valuation Project queries	16
Who to contact for Non-valuation queries	17
Range of Services	18
List of External Customers	19
Statement of Standards	19

## **FOREWORD**

I am pleased to present this Customer Action Plan for the period 2010 to 2012 which sets out our commitment to deliver a quality valuation service to our customers and aims to provide a supportive environment for all staff members. It shows how we intend to work towards our goals as stated in our Statement of Strategy, and maintain an ethos of high quality customer service, reflecting the needs and expectations of our customers.

This action plan will build on the substantial progress already made by providing a comprehensive framework for this Office to progress and develop. The plan shows how we propose to deliver a better service and what precisely we are promising our customers. It essentially sets out our promise of superior service, outlines the way in which we will meet customer needs and sets targets for practical things we will do to achieve this.

I hope that our plan reflects the standard of service that you expect from the Valuation Office. Whether you are a representative of a customer organisation, a member of the public seeking information about our services or a member or prospective member of staff, it is important that you feel that we are anticipating and providing an effective response to your needs.

We will be glad to hear from you about our services, particularly on how you think they can be improved in your interests. If you have suggestions for further improvement, we would be glad to hear from you at (01) 817 1149.

Aidan Murray  
Commissioner of Valuation  
January 2010

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Mandate**

The Valuation Office is the State property valuation agency. The core business of the Office is the maintenance of equitable valuation lists through the provision of accurate, up-to-date valuations of commercial and industrial properties to ratepayers and rating authorities as laid down by statute. On a nationwide basis, we maintain valuation data on approximately 1.8 million properties, of which about 170,000 are commercial in nature and subject to local rates. In the current year, it is estimated that will contribute in excess of €1.343 billion towards the provision of local services.

As well as providing for ongoing revision of rateable valuations, the Valuation Act, 2001 also provides for the revaluation of all commercial and industrial properties in the State. The revaluation will be done in each rating authority's functional area over the next decade.

The Office also provides where possible, a non-statutory valuation consultancy service to other Government Departments and State Agencies. This service includes advice on the sale, letting and purchase of property. Advice is also provided to the Revenue Commissioners, where requested, on the market valuation of property for taxation purposes.

### **Mission**

Our mission is to deliver a high quality, impartial valuation service to our customers, at a competitive cost, through skilled and motivated staff.

### **Service Provision - Staffing**

The Office has an authorised staff complement of 180, comprising valuers, administrative and technical personnel who operate in an integrated team structure, each team is cross-functional and staffed by professional, technical and administrative personnel whose work is focussed on a discrete group of customers in a specific geographic area (please see page 15 & 16 for details). In addition, there are four support teams handling accounts, customer services, human resources and information technology (please see page 17 for details).

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2010 - 2012**

The Valuation Office is committed to the Principles of Quality Customer Service approved by the Government and has introduced this plan to give effect to those principles and achieve our targets over the next three years.

The plan contains detailed proposals to improve the quality and timeliness of delivery of services and to provide greater and easier access to information. We will also strive to increase the utilisation of information and electronic technologies for the benefit of our customers. We will also provide meaningful consultation with our customers and staff who will be encouraged to comment and improve upon existing services.

In order to achieve our objectives we are committed to developing internal business plans which complement our strategic vision and objectives as set out in our Statement of Strategy 2009-2011. Arrangements will be made for the monitoring of and reporting on the commitments contained in this plan. The commitments to quality customer services will be included in each team's business plan and our targets will be monitored against performance indicators of achievement in each of our operational areas.

All customers can expect to be treated by us in a professional, fair and impartial manner with the utmost courtesy and respect. The areas in which we will take steps over the next three years to maintain and improve the quality of our customer service are:

- Provision of Information
- Consultation with customers
- Access to information about our services
- Standards of service in our Public Office
- Staff consultation and training
- Communication systems
- Service Delivery Timeframes
- Equal Treatment of all our Customers
- Complaints and compliments.

## **Provision of Information**

We recognise the importance of meeting the expectations of our customers for information that is timely, accurate and relevant to their needs.

### **Freedom of Information Acts**

The Freedom of Information Act 1997 and 2003 confer a number of legal rights on the general public:

- The right to seek access to information, subject to certain exemptions,
- The right to seek reasons for decisions affecting oneself,
- The right to have personal information about oneself corrected.

Should you wish to request information under the Freedom of Information Acts, you should contact:

#### **Freedom of Information,**

Valuation Office,  
Block 2,  
Irish Life Centre,  
Dublin, 1.

Phone: (01) 8171149

Fax: (01) 8171180

Please state clearly that you are requesting information under the Acts.

We will:

- Treat all requests impartially and equally, within the spirit and letter of the Acts.
- Make every effort to deal outside the scope of the Acts in regard to simple requests made
- Ensure that any requests received and formally dealt with under the Acts are processed by us within the statutory 28 day deadline.
- Try to ensure that all customers with whom we deal have a clear understanding of their rights and obligations in regard to Freedom of Information in all their dealings with us.

## **Valuation Office Website**

The Valuation Office Website represents a substantial information resource for customers, both internal and external.

We will:

- Ensure that our website conforms to best standards of design, ease of use and practicality
- Ensure that the information presented is relevant, accurate and up to date.
- Provide, where appropriate and feasible, links from our website to other relevant sources of information on the Internet.
- Maintain contact lists for users of the website.
- Make information generally available in a variety of formats to suit our customer needs.

## **Access to information**

With a view to providing greater public access to official information and to improving the quality of that information,

We will:

- Provide a standard property valuation report relevant to the customer enquiry.
- Provide a statement of service standards and timeliness of response in the Public Office.
- Provide ratepayers and rating authorities with accurate, full and timely information on individual property valuations.
- Ensure that forms are easily understood and simple to complete and that all leaflets and documents intended for customer use are up to date, accurate and available in our Public Office
- Furnish guides to the Valuation Office's services, records and procedures which have been published in accordance with sections 15 and 16 of the Freedom of Information Act, 1998. These will advise the public on how information held by the Office can be accessed and include rules and guidelines on all matters relevant to the work of the Office.
- Provide for customer information, a Statement of Strategy for the years 2009 – 2011.

- Publish an annual report of the Office in accordance with the Valuation Act, 2001 and the Public Service Management Act, 1997.

### **CONSULTATION WITH CUSTOMERS**

It is vitally important that we consult our customers, to ensure that our delivery of services remains relevant to their needs. To do this, the Office will ensure that:

- Prior to our Valuer staff visiting you to inspect your property, they will, where possible, contact you before-hand, arrange a mutually convenient date and time for their visit and give details of the documentation and records which they will require from you.
- On arrival they will introduce themselves, produce official identification and explain the purpose of their visit, its likely length and the documentation and records which they require.
- They will explain the basis of valuation; will leave documentation with you about the system, including information about your rights of appeal.
- They will afford you a reasonable amount of time to provide information and will give you a contact telephone number (land line or mobile).
- A customer services survey with our main customers will be carried out on an annual basis.
- All staff are encouraged to listen to customer comments, note any perceived deficiencies in the delivery of services and provide feedback to management.
- We will continue to participate in the Consultants Forum, which is the body through which we discuss matters of mutual interest with the principal bodies representing the valuation profession.
- Comments received from customers who call to the Public Office to transact business are welcomed and any deficiencies highlighted in the provision of service will be addressed.

## **PUBLIC OFFICE STANDARDS OF SERVICE**

### **Personal Callers**

- All office areas open to personal callers will be maintained to a high standard of cleanliness and comfort.
- The Reception, Public Office and consulting rooms will be accessible by people with disabilities.
- When personal callers arrive at our office for service, the staff will ensure that their enquiries are dealt with efficiently and promptly. In the event that the enquiry is not relevant to the Valuation Office, every effort will be made to direct the caller to a Department or Office that can assist him/her.
- Staff will be courteous and helpful and will respect the customer's views and will make consulting rooms available for private consultations.
- Interpretative services will be provided to staff to ensure that customers who wish to transact their business through Irish will be accommodated.
- All customers will be treated equally and no customer shall be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.
- Staff will ensure that forms and information are easily understood and that all leaflets and documents intended for customer use are up-to-date, accurate and available in our Public Office.
- We will continuously review access to our office for all callers.

## **STAFF CONSULTATION AND TRAINING**

In recognising the crucial role of staff in delivering Quality Customer Service, the Office will

- Heighten awareness among staff of the need for Quality Customer Service.
- Improve staff motivation by engagement in meaningful consultation under the auspices of the Partnership Committee which is representative of management, staff and unions.
- Consider new strategies on an ongoing basis to enhance the services which we provide to the public.
- Conduct a climate survey of all staff on an annual basis and address the issues raised.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH CUSTOMERS**

### **Correspondence**

Our postal address is: **Valuation Office Ireland,  
Block 2,  
Irish Life Centre,  
Abbey Street Lower,  
Dublin, 1.**

### **E-mail**

Our e-mail address is: [Info@valoff.ie](mailto:Info@valoff.ie)

- We will acknowledge all written enquiries and non-routine correspondence (including faxes and e-mail) promptly;
- We will reply to all communications within two weeks, if it is not possible to send you a full reply immediately;
- We will use clear and simple language that is easy to understand;

- All our correspondence will contain the name, team/section and full contact details of the person dealing with the matter and where possible a reference number or a file number;
- We will send any correspondence that is received by us but which is a matter for another Department or Agency to them immediately, and notify you of this course of action;
- We will ensure, to the best of our ability, that correspondence received in Irish is answered in that language;

## **Telephone**

When contacting our Office by telephone our main numbers are

**Telephone number:** (01) 817 1000  
**Fax number:** (01) 817 1180  
**LoCall:** 1890 304 444

Our code of practice for telephone usage requires in particular, that:

- We are generally available to answer your calls during normal office hours (9.15am – 1.00pm and 2.15pm – 5.30pm Monday – Friday [5.15pm Friday])
- We will answer your calls promptly and within 20 seconds.
- We will give our full names and team/section when answering the telephone.
- We will be as helpful and as informative as possible.
- If it is necessary to transfer your call to another staff member, we will tell you the name of the person to whom you are being transferred.
- If we cannot deal with your query on the spot, we will take details and call you back.
- We will give our direct Dial-In (DDI) number (i.e. 817+ the 4 digit extension number) which allows you to telephone individual members of staff directly.
- We will let you know that voice mail facilities have been introduced to further enhance the telephone service.
- We will keep internal telephone directories up to date.

- We will ensure that official letterheads are kept up to date and relevant addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are legibly printed.
- We will ensure that any first response staffs (e.g. Reception, Telephone Switch, etc) are properly trained in Customer Service techniques.

### **Technology**

We are continuously monitoring technological developments with a view to improving the services provided to our customers.

- Our Internet website - [www.valoff.ie](http://www.valoff.ie) - can receive customer views and comments which will be followed up by our Quality Customer Service Liaison Officer.
- We will continue to train staff so that they get the best results from modern information technology.
- Our Office's Information Technology Plan will include a commitment to quality customer service.
- We have a facility for secure payment for services over the internet

### **Forms & Leaflets**

- Our Office uses a number of forms and leaflets in conducting its business and they will be reviewed to ensure that they are worded in simple language, can be readily understood and as easy to complete as possible.
- During the period covered by this plan, our Customer Services Officer will assess the forms which we use and implement improvements where necessary.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

We have a number of publications and information leaflets which are of interest to the public at large and to the valuation and surveying professions. As we endeavour to maintain a high standard of presentation, we will:

- Arrange for their display and availability in our Public Office and Reception areas.
- Ensure that Office information will be made available on our Internet site ([www.valoff.ie](http://www.valoff.ie))

## **SERVICE DELIVERY TIMEFRAMES**

### **Rateable Valuation Services**

- We will comply with our statutory obligations under the Valuation Act, 2001
- We will ensure that no first appeal on hands is older than six months.

### **Provision of Valuation Certificates**

- We will provide certified extracts from the current valuation lists within one week of receiving applications.
- We will provide certified copies of maps showing valuation boundaries within one week of receiving an application.
- We will provide certified extracts from the valuation archive within four weeks of receiving an application.

**NOTE:** Compliance with the delivery time targets for valuation certificates depends on receipt of sufficient information to identify the property and receipt of the appropriate fee with the initial application.

## **EQUALITY OF TREATMENT**

We are committed to providing services to all our customers on an equal status basis. We will accommodate the needs of specific customers or groups of customers.

### **Legislative requirements**

A body of legislation exists which gives particular force to this element of Customer Service Action planning, which includes the Employment Equality Act 1998 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

The Equal Status Act prohibits discrimination and victimisation on nine grounds:

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religious beliefs
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller Community

We will:

- Ensure that no person is discriminated against by virtue of their membership of any of the groups covered by the nine categories;
- Be sensitive of the views of organisations representative of customers from across the nine categories when providing services;
- Have regard to the needs of a diverse customer base during policy formulation;
- Include training for staff on equality and diversity as part of overall customer service training.

## **COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS**

To maintain a high standard of service delivery, we have established a formal procedure to deal with customer complaints.

- Any customer complaint received will in the first instance be directed to the leader of the relevant team. Where a customer is dissatisfied with the team's response, or where a complaint is not a matter for resolution by an individual team, the complaint will be directed to the Customer Services Unit for the attention of

**Ms. Anne Durkin, Higher Executive Officer, Tel: (01) 817 1149,  
e-mail: [info@valoff.ie](mailto:info@valoff.ie)**

- Complainants will receive an immediate written acknowledgement from the Customer Services Unit and will receive a substantive response within twenty working days following receipt of the complaint.
- All complaints will be dealt with in a fair, open and sympathetic manner and the complainant will be kept fully informed of progress in dealing with their grievance.
- If we have made an error, we will make an immediate correction, offer an explanation and will apologise as quickly as possible.
- Complaints about inadequate service will also be handled by the Ombudsman whose role is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inaction adversely affecting persons or bodies in their dealings with Government Departments and Offices.

**The Ombudsman may be contacted at:  
18, Lower Leeson Street,  
Dublin, 2.  
Tel: (01) 678 5222  
Locall: 1890 223030  
Website: [irlgov.ie/ombudsman](http://irlgov.ie/ombudsman)**

- Compliments received will be acknowledged and forwarded to the relevant team leader and staff.

## Who to contact for Rateable Valuation Queries

Note: You can also use Lo-call 1890 304 444.

Team Leader		Counties
Patrick Conroy Email: <a href="mailto:Patrick.conroy@valoff.ie">Patrick.conroy@valoff.ie</a> Phone: 8171102		Carlow Kilkenny Waterford City Wexford Wicklow
Damien Curran Email: <a href="mailto:Damien.curran@valoff.ie">Damien.curran@valoff.ie</a> Phone: 8176435		Cavan Donegal Fingal Galway City & County Leitrim Louth Mayo Monaghan Roscommon Sligo
Dónal Ó hUallacháin Email: <a href="mailto:Donal.ohuallachain@valoff.ie">Donal.ohuallachain@valoff.ie</a> Phone: 8171113		Clare Kerry Limerick Longford Meath Offaly Tipperary Westmeath
John Colfer <a href="mailto:John.colfer@valoff.ie">John.colfer@valoff.ie</a> Phone: 8171062		Cork County Council Kildare Laois South Dublin County Council
Declan Lavelle <a href="mailto:Declan.lavelle@valoff.ie">Declan.lavelle@valoff.ie</a> Phone: 8171032		Dublin City

## Who to contact for Valuation Appeal Queries

Note: You can also use Lo-call 1890304 444

Geographic Areas	Contact	Phone	E-mail
All Counties and Districts	Appeal Officer	8171115	<a href="mailto:Paschal.conboy@valoff.ie">Paschal.conboy@valoff.ie</a>
All counties and Districts	Appeal Officer	8171161	<a href="mailto:Olivia.bellamy@valoff.ie">Olivia.bellamy@valoff.ie</a>

## Contact details for queries on the Revaluation Programme

Contact: Mr. Derek Love  
Revaluation Administration

Tel: +353-1 817 1033  
Locall 1890 531 431  
Fax: +353-1 817 1181  
E-mail: [revalinfo@valoff.ie](mailto:revalinfo@valoff.ie)

## Contact details for Special Valuation Project Queries

**Contact** The table below lists the contacts in the Special Projects Team who deal with global valuations of public service utilities, market valuation and capital taxation valuation queries.

Note: You can also use Lo-call 1890 304 444.

Counties	Team	Contact	Phone	E-mail
All Counties & Districts	Global Valuations	Team Leader	817 6437	<a href="mailto:Mark.adamson@valoff.ie">Mark.adamson@valoff.ie</a>
All Counties & Districts	Market Valuations and Capital Taxation Valuations	Team Leader	8171162	<a href="mailto:Orlaith.ryan@valoff.ie">Orlaith.ryan@valoff.ie</a>

### Contact details for Non-Valuation Queries

**Contacts** The table below lists the contacts for non-valuation queries.  
Note: You can also use Lo-call 1890 304 444.

Query Type	Contact Details	Phone	E-mail
<b>Accounts</b> , financial control, invoicing, payments to suppliers, staff salaries	Patricia O'Brien, Higher Executive Officer	817 1141	<a href="mailto:Patricia.obrien@valoff.ie">Patricia.obrien@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Customer Services</b> , archives, current and historical certificates, valuation list inspections	Anne Durkin, Higher Executive Officer	817 1149	<a href="mailto:Anne.durkin@valoff.ie">Anne.durkin@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Freedom of Information Requests</b>	Anne Durkin Catherine English	8171149 8171015	<a href="mailto:Anne.durkin@valoff.ie">Anne.durkin@valoff.ie</a> <a href="mailto:Catherine.english@valoff.ie">Catherine.english@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Freedom of Information Appeals</b>	Patrick McIlwee, Manager	817 1005	<a href="mailto:paddy.mcilwee@valoff.ie">paddy.mcilwee@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Training</b>	Patrick McIlwee, Manager	817 1005	<a href="mailto:paddy.mcilwee@valoff.ie">paddy.mcilwee@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Information Research</b> , property market information, internal office library services	Mark Adamson, Team Leader	817 6437	<a href="mailto:mark.adamson@valoff.ie">mark.adamson@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Information Technology</b> , management of existing systems, development of new systems, purchase of hardware & software and IT training	Paul Malone, Manager	817 1025	<a href="mailto:Paul.malone@valoff.ie">Paul.malone@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Corporate Services</b> , Recruitment, Issues relating to Disability or Access.	Deirdre Kenny, Higher Executive Officer	8171039	<a href="mailto:Deirdre.Kenny@valoff.ie">Deirdre.Kenny@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Health &amp; safety</b> , Customer Service standards, Internal Audit, Corporate Reports.	Patrick McCarthy, Manager	8171006	<a href="mailto:Patrick.mccarthy@valoff.ie">Patrick.mccarthy@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Personnel</b> , human resource management	Maria Norris, Higher Executive Officer	817 1036	<a href="mailto:Maria.norris@valoff.ie">Maria.norris@valoff.ie</a>
<b>Purchasing Officer</b> for office supplies, services and maintenance.	Brendan Robbins, Executive Officer	8171035	<a href="mailto:brendan.robbins@valoff.ie">brendan.robbins@valoff.ie</a>

**Further contact** If your query is not in one of these categories please contact:  
**Ms. Anne Durkin, Customer Services Unit, Telephone: 817 1149 ;**  
**e-mail: [anne.durkin@valoff.ie](mailto:anne.durkin@valoff.ie)**

## **RANGE OF SERVICES**

The Valuation Office is first and foremost a service organisation, its ethos is customer focus, timely delivery and value for money. The range of services carried out by the various business units are as follows:

- The provision of valuations for rating purposes to local authorities on which commercial rates are levied.
- 
- Valuation advice on the acquisition, disposal and letting of property by Government Departments and Offices.
- Valuation advice to the Revenue Commissioners for capital taxation purposes.
- Valuation advice to local authorities under the Tenant Purchase Scheme.
- 
- Valuation advice to the Dept of Social and Family Affairs for social welfare purposes.
- The provision of certificates of valuation for the purposes of property registration by the Land Registry and Registry of Deeds.
- The furnishing of certificates of valuation to facilitate the issuing of bookmaker and liquor licences by the courts.
- The provision of maps which have been certified as showing the boundaries of properties for which a valuation is entered in the valuation lists.
- Genealogical research facilities are made available. We maintain an extensive and unique archive of property valuations with accompanying maps and documentation dating back to the 1850s. The material is used extensively for genealogical enquiries.

## **LIST OF EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS**

**Local Authorities**

**The Business Community**

**Rating Consultants**

**Auctioneers and Estate Agents.**

**Members of the General Public**

**Members of the Legal Profession**

**Undergraduate Students engaged in Property Research**

**Law Searchers**

**Genealogical Researchers**

**Individual Members of the Irish Diaspora engaged in family research over the Internet.**

**Government Departments, Offices and Agencies**

## **STATEMENT OF STANDARDS**

In your dealings with the Valuation Office, we will ensure that you are treated fairly and impartially and that your right to privacy and confidentiality is respected. We believe that timeliness and courtesy are central to the concept of quality service and we are committed to a programme of continuous improvement in these areas.

### **Callers to our Public Office – we will:**

- ❖ Deal with your enquiry promptly;
- ❖ Be courteous and fair;
- ❖ Provide you with as much information as we can;
- ❖ Keep our public offices clean, safe and accessible.

### **Telephones – we will:**

- ❖ Respond quickly and courteously;
- ❖ Provide you with the information which you require or transfer you to someone who can satisfy your enquiry;
- ❖ Arrange to call you back or write to you as soon as possible if we cannot deal with your query.

### **Letters – we will:**

- ❖ Reply to your letters within two weeks;
- ❖ Send you an interim acknowledgement / reply within one week if we expect a delay in issuing you a substantive response;
- ❖ Use clear, simple language;
- ❖ Provide contact names and a phone number on all our correspondence.

### **Information – we will:**

- ❖ Provide as much information as possible;
- ❖ Insure that all information is clear, accurate and up-to-date;
- ❖ Display prominently in our Public Office, details of our fees and information on the range of services which we provide.

### **Complaints**

Complaints should be referred in the first instance to the appropriate team leader. If you are not satisfied with the response of the team, or if your complaint is not proper to an individual team, the matter should be referred to Ms. Anne Durkin, tel: 817 1149 in our Customer Service Unit

**We will deal with your complaints fairly and promptly.**

### **Timescales for delivery of services**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Response Time</b>
Provision of rateable valuations	Within 6 months of assignment to a valuer
Issue of valuation appeal decisions	Within 6 months of assignment to a valuer
Certified extracts from the valuation list	Within one week
Certified copies of maps showing valuation boundaries	Within one week
Certified extracts from the valuation archive	Within four weeks
Inspection of records	On request