



wwetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Phoirt Láirge agus Loch Garman
*Waterford and Wexford
Education and Training Board*

Customer Service Action Plan

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Introduction

Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board (WWETB) is committed to providing the highest levels of service to all our customers in accordance with the principles of Quality Customer Service.

The delivery of effective, quality customer service is a priority for WWETB.

Our Customer Service Action Plan sets out how we intend to provide our customers with the highest possible level of service. It outlines our commitment to the provision and delivery of customer service in accordance with the twelve principles of Quality Customer Service and the corresponding actions WWETB will undertake in this respect.

The Customer Service Action Plan identifies specific actions to help us to improve our levels of customer service, explains how complaints can be made by those who feel that our agreed standards have not been met and describes how we will monitor our performance.

Our services are delivered through a wide range of contact points and channels including, telephone, public offices and written correspondence. WWETB is committed to providing a quality service to all its customers through these channels within a culture of continuous improvement at all levels.

The Role of WWETB

WWETB has been providing a comprehensive range of education and training services throughout Waterford and Wexford since July 2013. We are the largest education and training provider across both counties, delivering education and training programmes through primary education, second-level colleges, Further Education Colleges, Further Education and Training Centres, an Outdoor Education and Training Centre, Adult Education programmes, Community Education initiatives and Youth Services.

WWETB aims to lead learning through the delivery of high quality, inclusive, responsive and innovative services in our community.

Our Strategy Statement

WWETB's Strategy Statement informs and guides the main areas for future planning within WWETB for the period 2018-2022. The Strategy Statement outlines the vision, mission and core values which shape our five overarching strategic goals, each of which will be responded to through a number of supporting actions.



Our Vision

WWETB aims to lead learning through the delivery of high quality, inclusive, responsive and innovative education and training services in our community.

Our Mission

WWETB's mission is to provide a wide range of education and training programmes, services and supports for young children, young people and adults across the Waterford-Wexford region.

Our Core Values

The core values that guide us in providing our services are:



Our Customers

For the purposes of our Customer Charter and associated action plan, the following groups are considered to be customers of WWETB:

Our Internal Customers: Our employees, existing learners and students, the elected members of our Board and Committees.

Our External Customers: Prospective learners and students, key external stakeholders, communities and visitors to whom we provide a service. Other external customers include statutory bodies, government departments, voluntary bodies and other external groups with whom we interact.

Developing Our Customer Service Action Plan

In order to benchmark our current performance against our proposed customer service commitments, we have conducted a comprehensive consultation process. WWETB has engaged with key stakeholder groups, thereby ensuring an inclusive process. The consultation phase consisted of one-to-one meetings, focus group sessions and an online survey issued to all staff. Students and learners were also consulted as part of this process. The results of the consultation process and survey have given us a representative picture of our current performance in relation to service provision and delivery. It has also given us an outline of the aspiration for the future.

We regard feedback as the key to understanding the needs and expectations of our customers and welcome and encourage customers to provide feedback. We encourage staff to use their day-to-day contact with customers (including other staff) as a means of gathering feedback on the quality of service provided.

The actions set out in the Customer Service Action Plan have been developed from the priority issues raised during the consultation phase. We are mindful of our obligations under legislation in terms of how we deliver our services.

Our Commitment to Quality Customer Service

As an organisation, we are committed to delivering quality customer service. Our commitments and the actions we will carry out to maintain and improve the quality of our customer service are set out below.

Principle 1: Quality Service Standards

WWETB is committed to publishing a statement that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers (internal and external) can expect and deserve.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
1.1	Ensure that all customers are kept fully informed of the standards of service they can expect to receive from WWETB. This will be done through making available a copy of our Customer Charter in all WWETB's public offices, schools and centres
1.2	Ensure that a digital copy of the Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan is available to download from WWETB's website (www.wwetb.ie)
1.3	Commit to delivering the actions outlined in the Customer Service Action Plan and produce an evaluation for publication in the Annual Report
1.4	Provide training on quality customer service to staff in an effort to build a culture of excellent customer service at WWETB. In particular, training to be made available to staff who have specific external customer facing roles on a regular basis
1.5	The following standards will be adhered to: Telephone Service: • We will answer phones promptly and courteously • We will deal with your query efficiently and professionally and will strive to be as helpful as possible • We will direct your call to the most appropriate person as quickly as possible and will provide you with the name and contact details of the person who will deal with your query • If we cannot give you an answer immediately, we will take your details and phone you back at a time that is convenient for you or we will give you the name of the staff member who will call you back. Email • We will acknowledge correspondence within 3 working days and will endeavour to reply within 5 working days or less • We will ensure all our email correspondence includes a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address.

- When your enquiry is relevant to a department within WWETB we will forward your query and inform you that we have done so and to whom it has been forwarded
- We will write as clearly and simply as possible, keeping technical terms to a minimum. If we use technical terms and acronyms, we will explain them
- Every staff member will have a signature containing contact information on their email
- We will notify you by “out of office” email response if a staff member is absent for more than 3 working days and provide you with an alternative contact.

Letter

- We aim to acknowledge receipt of all such correspondence within 5 working days of receipt, and issue a substantive reply to a query within 20 working days
- Where this is not possible, we will advise you of the reasons for the delay. In particular complex matters and matters of a legal nature can require longer time frames.
- We will provide a contact name, address and telephone number in all correspondence issued.
- We will write as clearly and simply as possible, keeping technical terms to a minimum. If we use technical terms or acronyms, we will explain them
- We will give a contact name, telephone number and email address in all written correspondence
- Every member of staff

Visitors to our Public Offices, Schools and Centres

- We will ensure that all enquiries are dealt with promptly and efficiently
- We will ensure that you are seen punctually where appointments have been made
- We will treat all customers in a polite, courteous and fair manner
- We will provide facilities which are safe, accessible and maintained to a high standard
- We will respect your privacy and confidentiality

Online Services

- We will strive to ensure that the information on our website is clear and accurate, and technical terms and acronyms will be explained as appropriate

- We will make it easy to find information, forms and publications on our website/intranet
- We will make it easy to submit a comment, complaint or submission on our website/intranet where applicable
- We will make sure our website/intranet meets accessibility standards
- We will continue to expand our range of online services so that you can access our services at a time and place that is convenient for you

Principle 2: Equality and Diversity

WWETB is committed to delivering a quality service to all our customers and we will do all in our power to ensure that no one is discriminated against because of their gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. We will accommodate diversity and work to make our services more accessible for people experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
2.1	Ensure that all staff are aware of the Human Rights and Equality Statement and of their obligations in this regard
2.2	Comply with Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005, which requires all Government Departments and Agencies to ensure that parts of their buildings, are as far as practicable, accessible to persons with disabilities
2.3	Appoint Disability Officer/Equality Officer/ Inclusion Officer
2.4	Ensure that our Communications Plan includes methods of communication to ensure access to information to people of all literacy/language levels
2.5	Set up an Inclusion and Diversity Committee/Working group
2.6	Ensure that appropriate supports are in place for refugees, Asylum seekers, immigrants, members of the Traveller community etc. when they attend our schools/centres.
2.7	Strengthen our approach to providing support for mental health (psychological) issues within our schools and centres
2.8	Continue to provide flexible working hours to ensure work/life balance

Principle 3: Physical Access

WWETB is committed to providing clean, safe, accessible public buildings, providing private spaces for meeting with customers when required.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
3.1	Comply with Section 25 of the Disability Act 2005, requiring all Government Departments and Agencies to ensure that parts of their buildings, are as far as practicable, accessible to persons with disabilities
3.2	Carry out Health and Safety audits on our buildings to ensure that all are clean, comfortable and comply with occupational health and safety standards
3.3	Ensure that the Corporate Safety Statement is available in each of our buildings and that there is a Health and Safety Committee responsible for managing and reporting on any issues arising
3.4	Continue to be proactive in applying to the DES for funding to improve the standard of our schools
3.5	Prioritise the delivery of infrastructural projects, including new buildings and/or large extensions, to meet modern educational and training needs.
3.6	Continue to be proactive in applying to SOLAS for funding to improve the standard of our Further Education and Training Centres
3.7	Prioritise the highest environmental standards with regard to new builds (NZEB rating etc.)
3.8	Ensure that risk assessment are carried out where appropriate and that staff safety is paramount in all schools and centres
3.9	Ensure that SNAs have access to lifts and ramp training
3.10	Ensure each school/centre/building has adequate parking facilities, including for night classes
3.11	Ensure there are floor markings where required in all our buildings
3.12	Ensure that we have specialist equipment where necessary and that staff are provided with instruction, information and training necessary

Principle 4: Information

WWETB is committed to providing information that is clear, timely and accurate and that meets the requirements of people with specific needs.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
4.1	Redesign the WWETB website, and associated school websites, to make them more user-friendly
4.2	Develop an intranet site for staff of WWETB for staff information and knowledge sharing
4.3	Improve our use of social media as a tool to provide timely updates on services
4.4	Review all forms to ensure that they are easy to complete and use plain English in the instructions
4.5	Make available the 'Plain English Style Guide for the Public Service' available to all staff via the intranet and encourage the use of same through reiterating the availability of the guide at staff meetings
4.6	Use multiple forms for the distribution of information to staff, students and learners and the public, through online, social media and published channels
4.7	Publish an annual communications plan on the intranet so that staff are aware of priorities and actions taking place with regard to internal and external communications.
4.8	Develop a marketing strategy for our courses and services, to include the distribution of marketing material, ensuring that our services and courses are being marketed to the appropriate audiences and in relevant locations.
4.9	Publish branding guidelines for WWETB to support the development of a strong and consistent brand and culture for the organisation
4.10	A list of up to date contact details for key WWETB staff will be made available through the intranet and website.
4.11	Review the signage within and outside our buildings to ensure that it is accurate and useful to internal and external customers
4.12	Ensure that there is provision in all buildings for visitors to a building to engage with a designated person who can provide support. This relates particularly to buildings where there is no designated reception area
4.13	Organise specific information sharing sessions across departments in WWETB

Principle 5: Timeliness and Courtesy

WWETB is committed to delivering quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
5.1	Ensure that all customers are treated with courtesy and that all enquiries are dealt with promptly and efficiently
5.2	Ensure that all telephone communications with the office are dealt with in an efficient, timely and courteous manner
5.3	Ensure that all staff members provide their name and section when answering telephone calls
5.4	Ensure that voicemail messages are updated regularly and that all voicemail messages are responded to within three working days
5.5	Ensure that full contact details are provided on all written or e-mail communications
5.6	Acknowledge receipt of written communications within specific timeframe. If it is not possible to deal with the matter promptly an interim reply will be issued
5.7	Provide training on quality customer service to staff in an effort to build a culture of excellent customer service at WWETB. In particular, training to be made available to staff who have specific external customer facing roles on a regular basis

Principle 6: Complaints

WWETB will maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided or decisions taken in relation to services. We will ensure that our staff are supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

(Our Customer Complaints Procedure, which also details how complaints can be made, is contained at Appendix 2 of this Action Plan)

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
6.1	Deal with all complaints within the timeframes set in our Complaints Procedure
6.2	Publicise the Customer Service Complaints Procedure on our intranet and website
6.3	Ensure that all complaints are treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence
6.4	Complaints will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation
6.5	Monitor complaints to ensure that future services are improved where necessary

Principle 7: Appeals

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

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
7.1	Deal with appeals within the timeframes set in our complaints/appeals procedure
7.2	Ensure that all appeals are treated promptly, fairly, impartially and in confidence
7.3	Records of appeals will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation

Principle 8: Consultation and Evaluation

WWETB is committed to listening to its stakeholders – internal and external. It values opportunities for consultation and engagement with staff, students and learners and external stakeholders and understands that this consultation will ensure that our services are delivered to a higher standard. This consultation is important in both the development and the evaluation of our services.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
8.1	Develop customer feedback mechanisms, including use of online feedback tools and focus group sessions where staff can interact and share ideas (including students/learners and parents)
8.2	Consult with stakeholders on an ongoing basis in order to develop and enhance the services provided
8.3	Promote a culture of continuous improvement within the organisation
8.4	Regularly survey our customers to get feedback on the quality of the services we provide and report on our performance in our Annual Report
8.5	Ensure that the feedback from all consultation processes is analysed and taken on board and an action plan devised to ensure progressive improvement
8.6	Regularly measure and evaluate performance against commitments in our Customer Charter

Principle 9: Choice

WWETB will continue to seek opportunities to provide choice in service delivery, where feasible, including flexibility with regard to the delivery of courses. We will use available and emerging technologies to ensure access and choice and quality of delivery.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
9.1	Expand the range of transactions that can be carried out online so that customers can access services when it is convenient for them.
9.2	Ensure the availability of multiple contact options within the organisation, including telephone, email and website addresses
9.3	Examine new technology in order to develop convenient alternative ways of interacting with members of staff
9.4	Explore alternative teaching and training methods, including online provision, to increase flexibility and access for learners

Principle 10: Official Languages Equality

WWETB will continue to provide quality services through Irish and/or bilingually and we will inform customers of their right to be dealt with through one or other of the official languages.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
10.1	Publish a statement on our website and our intranet to indicate that services can be delivered to customers through Irish and/or bilingually
10.2	Ensure that the Annual Report, Strategy Statement and other information publications and key policy documents produced by or on behalf of WWETB, are available in Irish
10.3	Publish all office publications bilingually
10.4	Continue to maintain our website in the Irish and English language
10.5	Assist you in conducting your business through the Irish language
10.6	Implement the actions outlined in WWETB's Scéim Teanga

Principle 11: Coordination

WWETB will work to develop a more coordinated and consistent approach to delivery of our services across all departments in the organisation.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
11.1	Provide details of departments and services on our intranet and website so that customers know who to contact
11.2	Organise specific information sharing sessions across departments in WWETB
11.3	Develop and implement an induction programme for new staff to ensure that they are given information with regard to the whole organisation as one entity
11.4	Encourage cross-functional working across departments where staff understand the role they play in the lifecycle of service delivery. This will ensure a more integrated service provision for customers
11.5	Encourage effective communication across departments, through increased opportunities for face-to-face and online meetings with colleagues in other departments

Principle 12: Internal Customer

WWETB is committed to supporting all of its staff and recognises that its staff are the greatest asset of the organisation. As internal customers of WWETB, staff will be supported and consulted with in regard to service delivery issues. Further, staff of WWETB will be afforded the same level of courtesy and professionalism by their colleagues that is expected for our external customers.

WWETB will carry out the following actions:

Point	Actions
12.1	Develop ways to acknowledge staff who are providing good customer service so that we foster and improve the quality of our service
12.2	We are committed to responding to queries from colleagues as quickly and as accurately as possible, within the response timeframes set out
12.3	Continue to produce a staff newsletter for all staff, so that they are informed of developments and initiatives occurring elsewhere in the organisation
12.4	Organise specific information sharing sessions across departments in WWETB
12.5	Develop an intranet site for staff of WWETB for staff information and knowledge sharing
12.6	Continue to formally recognise the contribution of staff on their retirement from WWETB through the organisation of a celebratory event
12.7	Ensure all members of staff are treated with dignity and respect and are supported and valued
12.8	Regularly assess our buildings to ensure that they are fit-for-purpose and comfortable for staff, students and learners and that they comply to Health and Safety legislation
12.9	Develop a structured approach to performance review and 360 feedback for the organisation to benefit staff and facilitate constructive discussions with management with regard to roles, access to training and mentoring
12.10	Publish a Stress Management policy which takes into account work related stress and ways of alleviating work related stress within the organisation
12.11	Develop a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) policy for the organisation to support staff in upskilling and continuous learning.

Monitoring our performance

The provision of quality customer service involves delivering a service of the highest quality to all customers and ensuring continuous improvement in the standard of the services provided. We commit to monitoring our performance by:

- Seeking customer feedback and learning from customer complaints to identify areas for improvement
- Assessing the impact of the actions set out in this Action Plan

We will report on progress on the implementation of this Customer Service Action Plan in our Annual Report.

We will use our Annual Report to report on the service standards in place, how performance has been measured, whether standards have been achieved and the next steps in the customer service improvement process.

Where standards have not been met, we will identify how it is intended to meet those standards in the future.

Training

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

We are fully committed to investing in appropriate customer service training for all staff and to regular training where necessary, particularly for those members of staff in regular contact with our stakeholders and members of the general public.