

**Customer Charter**

The current published Customer Charter is available at this link:

[About - The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon](https://artscouncil.ie/about/)

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| **Version**  | **Date**  | **Reviewer** | **Approver** | **Comments / Changes**  |
| 1.1 | 2023 | Joey Kavanagh  | Tina Leonard | Brought up to date with correct contact and protocol information |
| 1.2 | 2024 | Joey Kavanagh | Tina Leonard | Strengthened content on protection staff ‘respect for staff. |
| 1.3 | March 2025  | Catherine Quinn  | Tina Leonard  | Minor updates made throughout, additional wording added under Section 5, ‘Our Customers’, Section 16 ‘Data Protection’ and Section 19, ‘Respect for our Staff’.  |
| 1.4 | March 2026 |  |  |  |

**Customer Charter**

1. The Arts Council is committed to providing an excellent service in accordance with the Principles of Quality Customer Service approved by Government. The principles of consultation will remain central to our work over the lifetime of this plan.

**WHO WE ARE**

*2. Vision*

Our vision is for an Ireland where the arts:

· are valued as central to civic life

· where the arts are practiced and enjoyed widely in our communities

· where those working professionally in the arts can have productive and rewarding careers

· where the distinctive societal value of the arts is recognised and provided for politically

· where the Arts Council is resourced adequately to address the breadth of its remit

*3. Mission*

Our mission is to lead the development of the arts in Ireland.

We do this in four ways:

· We advocate the importance and value of the arts and promote their practice and development.

· We advise government and others on the arts as required by the Arts Act of 1951, 1973 and 2003.

 · We invest public monies allocated to us by government in supporting artists and arts organisations to make work of excellence and in other actions consistent with our remit.

· We work in partnership with the Department of Arts, Media, Communications, Culture and Sport, and with other government departments as well as with local government and with agencies and organisations within and beyond the cultural sector.

*4. Values*

Freedom of thought and of expression which is essential to the development of new ideas and new work

Commitment to excellence in all aspects of our own work and of that of artists, arts organisations, and others we support

Integrity, accountability, transparency in all of our decision-making and especially in our investment of public monies

Respect for diversity of artistic practice, of public engagement, and of social and cultural traditions

Collegiality communicating and working respectfully with partners, stakeholders, and the whole arts sector

*5. Our Customers*

The Arts Council serves a wide range of customers and partnerships, including the Government, our Department, local authorities, strategically funded organisations, the wider arts sector, individual artists.

We serve our customers by working to build a central place for the arts in Irish life.

Working in line with schedules for various funding schemes, Arts team staff are available to provide bespoke advice about applications while our team at Reception can provide more general support.

Our staff are recognised as internal customers and we are committed to ensuring that they are properly informed, supported and consulted during their course of their work.

**OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR CUSTOMERS**

*6. Official Languages*

We are fully committed to complying with the requirements outlined in the Official Languages Act, 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 2021.

Should you prefer to conduct your business with us through Irish, we will make every effort to assist you. This includes the following commitments:

* Correspondence received in Irish will be answered in Irish
* Key documents such as Statement of Strategy and Annual Reports will be made available in Irish and English
* Communications tools, including newsletters, press statements and our website, will be made available in Irish and in English

*7. Our Website, www.artscouncil.ie*

Our website is currently available in Irish and English. It details our work, activities and all corporate information relating to the Arts Council; provides information on funding and governance and a library of publications including a monthly Newsletter.

*8. Contact by Telephone*

We will be available to answer your calls during office hours of 9.00am to 5.30pm Monday-Friday.

Our aim is to answer all calls as promptly as possible. We will identify ourselves and our area of work, be helpful and courteous, and do our best to provide clear and accurate information. If we cannot provide an immediate answer, we will take details of your query, and your call will be returned by an individual who can give you a considered response and/or we will arrange to have information sent to you.

Our main telephone number is 00 353 (0) 1 6180200.

*9. Electronic and Written Communications*

We will ensure that staff use automated email messages when out of the office to ensure that the customer is given another point of contact within the relevant office. Where the information you are looking for is not directly available from the Arts Council, we will try to advise on alternative information sources or resources.

All post delivered to the Arts Council is date-stamped and distributed to the relevant person/team leader. We will ensure all our written replies include the name, address, email address and any other relevant contact details of the staff member who is responding to your correspondence.

*10. Meetings and Visits to our Offices*

Please pre-arrange meetings with staff in our offices before your arrival to ensure their availability to meet with you and avoid any unnecessary inconvenience you may experience if they are unavailable. Where it is not possible for you to meet during office hours, we will try to be flexible and meet you at a mutually convenient time. Visitors are requested to sign the Visitors’ Book in Reception upon arrival. We would like to advise that visitors who arrive without an appointment may not be accommodated.

Visitors to Arts Council offices will be greeted by a staff member at Reception and, where practicable, will be accompanied by a staff member while in the building.

*11. Access for People with Disabilities*

We will ensure our public offices and information are accessible, in-so-far as is possible, and we will provide maximum assistance and support to enable you to conduct your business. This commitment covers physical access and egress to our public office and other accessibility needs required to engage with us, for example the use of ISL interpreter, and accommodations for those making funding applications. If you have a disability and require further assistance, please contact the Arts Council Access Officer at: disabilityaccess@artscouncil.ie

*12. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion*

As stated in our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, we are committed to our public sector duty to ensure equality of opportunity, access, and outcomes for all those living in Ireland regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, civil or family status, religion, age, disability, race, or membership of the Traveller community. In addition, the Arts Council also notes the ground of socio-economic background as a further basis for which equality of opportunity, access and outcomes must be guaranteed. We will treat all our customers with respect and dignity, and we will identify and seek to eliminate barriers to our services based on any of these grounds outlined.

*13. Complaints*

We aim to deliver the best possible service to our customers. If you are dissatisfied with the quality of service that you have received, you have the right to complain. We recommend that you contact the Arts Council or the manager of the service you have been dealing with to let them know your concerns. The manager will discuss your concerns with you and, if you remain unhappy, you can make a formal complaint by writing to the Council. Complaints must be made in writing (or equivalent, such as an email) within 1 month of the date the alleged incident occurred and must provide the details of the complaint.

Should you wish to lodge a complaint you can do so by sending a letter to

The Arts Council of Ireland,

70 Merrion Square South,

Dublin 2,

D02 NY52.

Alternatively, you can email your complaint to appealsandcomplaints@artscouncil.ie.

If you have been dealing with a specific Arts Council staff member, please address your complaint to them.

Any complaints we receive will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt and will be investigated by the appropriate member of the Arts Council’s Senior Staff. A written response to the complaint will be provided within 20 working days from the date that the Arts Council receives your complaint. If you are not happy with our reply, you can refer the complaint to the Ombudsman for consideration. We will cooperate with the Ombudsman or any other people or organisations that act for you. Contact details for the Ombudsman are below:

Office of Ombudsman,

18 Lower Leeson Street,

Dublin 2.

Telephone: 01 678 5222

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

*14. Appeals*

Applicants may appeal against a funding decision if they feel that:

* we have not followed our published procedures for administration and assessment
* we have not applied our published procedures for administration and assessment fairly

You must be able to show us the reasons for your appeal.

Appeals are heard throughout the year and are considered by an appeals panel.

The conclusions and recommendations of the panel are forwarded to the next plenary meeting of the Council for final decision.

Further information on how to appeal is available on our website at this link

[How to appeal a funding decision](https://artscouncil.ie/funding/guidance-for-applicants/after-you-apply-what-happens-next/how-to-appeal-a-funding-decision/#:~:text=The%20steps%20to%20query%20a%20decision%20or%20lodge,a%20decision%20on%20the%20appeal.%20...%20More%20items)

*15. Freedom of Information Acts 2014 (FOI)*

The FOI Acts gives members of the public the right to access to all official records, paper and electronic, in possession of the Arts Council. Access to information under the Act is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits. More information about Freedom of Information is available on our website.

Should you wish to make a request under FOI for access to records that you believe are held by the Arts Council, you can submit a request by e-mail to: foi@artscouncil.ie

*16. Data Protection*

Data protection safeguards individuals' personal information from damage, corruption and loss ensuring that personal data remains secure.

The GDPR (*also known as General Data Protection Regulation 2016/6791*) came into force on the 25 May 2018, updating data protection legislation and with the purpose of strengthening the rights individuals have around their personal data.

The Privacy Notice available on our website provides customers with information around how we use your data as an organisation; information around our obligations; and, on your rights as an individual in relation to your personal data. You can read the Privacy Notice on our website at this link [Privacy notice](https://artscouncil.ie/privacy-notice/)

Should you wish to contact our Data Protection team, you can do so by emailing dataprotection@artscouncil.ie

*17. Monitor and Evaluate our performance*

We will evaluate our performance against the standards set out in this Charter on a continuous basis.

*18. Help us to help you*

To assist us in reaching our service standards, we would be grateful if you could quote any relevant reference number in all communication with us and ensure that application forms are fully, accurately, and legibly completed by the specified deadline (where applicable).

Familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of schemes before completing application forms and provide all necessary supporting documentation as required. Please inform us of any changes to your circumstance which many have a bearing on decisions made by the Arts Council.

*19. Respect for our staff*

The Arts Council of Ireland is committed to fostering a respectful and safe environment for both our customers and staff. We understand that you may sometimes be frustrated when you communicate with us. However, we believe that our staff have the right to work in a safe environment, free from any abuse or harm caused by others. We do not tolerate abusive behaviour towards our staff.

 Types of behaviour that we consider abusive can include:

· Shouting

· Threats

· Intimidation

 · Physical harm

· Violence of any kind

· Using language that causes our staff to feel afraid or unsafe

· Using religious, cultural, or racial insults

·Using derogatory remarks based on sexual orientation, gender, age, or abilities

Furthermore,the following types of behaviour are not tolerated:

*Unreasonable lack of co-operation*

This may be demonstrated by a failure to clearly define the matter you are raising with the Arts Council and also includes non-cooperation by you which may hinder, obstruct or delay how we may deal with the matter.

*Unreasonable persistence*

If an application has been deemed ineligible or has been deemed unsuccessful following the completion of the Appeals process, it is unreasonable to refuse to accept the decision or insist that another member of staff looks again at the case.

*Unreasonable behaviour*

Unreasonable behaviour includes multiple phone calls, emails or letters about the same matter, rude or aggressive conduct and attempting to provoke staff into engaging in unnecessary and time-wasting argument. Inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations are also considered to be abusive behaviour.

In cases such as those listed above, our staff will ask you to stop such behaviour.

Our behaviour guidelines follow a One Strike rule.

· We will warn you to stop the abusive or unreasonable behaviour immediately or we will end the interaction.

· If the behaviour continues, we will end the interaction.

The Arts Council reserves the right to potentially block email addresses in certain circumstances.