



Citizens **Information** Board
information · advice · advocacy

WHERE TO COMPLAIN

A guide to enforcement
and redress bodies

Useful numbers – Callsave 1850, Freephone 1800 and Lo-call 1890

Service	Telephone	Web
Citizens Information Phone Service	1890 777 121	citizensinformation.ie
Agriculture Appeals Office	1890 671 671	agriappeals.gov.ie
An Coimisinéir Teanga/ Official Languages Commissioner	1890 504 006	coimisineir.ie
Commission for Energy Regulation	1890 404 404	energycustomers.ie
Competition Authority	1890 220 224	tca.ie
ComReg	1890 229 668	comreg.ie
Data Protection Commissioner	1890 252 231	dataprotection.ie
Disability Appeals Officer	1850 211583	odao.ie
Employment Appeals Tribunal	1890 220 222	eatribunal.ie
Environmental Protection Agency	1890 335 599	epa.ie
Equality Authority	1890 245 545	equality.ie
Equality Tribunal	1890 344 424	equalitytribunal.ie
Financial Regulator	1890 777 777	itsyourmoney.ie
Financial Services Ombudsman	1890 882 090	financialombudsman.ie
Food Safety Authority	1890 336 677	fsai.ie
Health Service Executive	1850 241 850	hse.ie
Information Commissioner	1890 223 030	oic.gov.ie
Injuriesboard.ie	1890 829 121	injuriesboard.ie
Labour Court	1890 220 228	labourcourt.ie
Legal Aid Board	1890 615 200	legalaidthboard.ie
National Consumer Agency	1890 432 432	consumerconnect.ie
National Employment Rights Authority	1890 808 090	employmentrights.ie
Ombudsman	1890 223 030	ombudsman.gov.ie
Ombudsman for Children	1800 202 040	oco.ie
Press Ombudsman	1890 208 080	pressombudsman.ie



WHERE TO COMPLAIN

This guide for public service users and consumers is published by the Citizens Information Board, the national agency responsible for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy on social services to the public. The Citizens Information Board also has a remit to assist and support people with disabilities in accessing their entitlements.

Citizens, consumers, customers and clients all have rights, not just to services but also to certain standards in the delivery of those services. This booklet is a guide to ensuring that you get the services to which you are entitled and that you know how to go about getting redress if you do not get those services or if you do not get the appropriate standard of service.

It is a guide to the agencies which help to enforce rights; it is not a guide to rights as such. The Citizens Information Board provides extensive information on rights and entitlements to services through its publications and the Citizens Information website (citizensinformation.ie).

A list of publications and resources is given at the back of this booklet.

December 2008

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER 1 MAKING A COMPLAINT OR APPEAL	8
CHAPTER 2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION	11
CHAPTER 3 THE COURTS SYSTEM	14
CHAPTER 4 PUBLIC SERVICES	22
CHAPTER 5 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LABOUR AGENCIES	54
CHAPTER 6 CONSUMER COMPLAINTS AND BUSINESS REGULATION	58
CHAPTER 7 FINANCIAL SERVICES	86



CHAPTER 8 REGULATION OF PROFESSIONALS	93
CHAPTER 9 MEDIA AND ARTS	102
CHAPTER 10 INTERNATIONAL	106
CITIZENS INFORMATION SERVICES	108
ORGANISATION INDEX	116
SUBJECT INDEX	120
FEEDBACK FORM	127

INTRODUCTION

The Citizens Information Board is mainly concerned with ensuring that you have information on your rights and entitlements. This booklet aims to ensure that you know how to enforce those rights and entitlements. It does not set out your rights but it does tell you what bodies exist to help you to enforce those rights. It is aimed primarily at individuals who are users of services and consumers of goods.

This booklet is concerned with a very wide range of bodies, both statutory and non-statutory. It includes bodies which enforce rights to public services such as income maintenance, health services and education; bodies which regulate various industries and professions; bodies which enforce laws in relation to the environment and the provision of financial services; bodies which can help you if the goods you bought are not fit for their purpose; bodies which can ensure that your employment rights are respected. It also includes many bodies which do not have a specific function of helping you to enforce your rights but which may, nevertheless, be able to help you to do so. These include bodies which are primarily representative but which aim to maintain high standards within their field.

On Budget day in October 2008, the Government announced that it would be reorganising a number of agencies in the public sector. This reorganisation will affect some of the agencies mentioned in this booklet. The proposed change is noted in the entry for each agency affected. In most cases, the changes proposed can take effect only after legislation is passed. Some of the proposed changes will not involve changes in function but mainly in administrative arrangements. It is not clear when these changes will come into effect.



Enforcing your rights

The primary means of enforcing your rights is through the Courts. This guide is mainly concerned with the non-Court bodies which exist for the purpose of enforcing rights but we do include a very brief description of the Courts. These other bodies are sometimes referred to as "Alternative Dispute Resolution" (ADR) mechanisms.

Everyone has the right of access to the Courts but it is not always practicable to use that right. You may not be able to afford the costs involved or the issue, while intensely annoying, may not be worth the costs involved. In some cases, your complaint may be concerned, not with the right to a service, but with the manner of delivery. In general, complaints about service delivery are not brought to the Courts but to a specific appeals or complaints procedure if there is one. There are many instances, however, where the only remedy is to be found through court action.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

There is no simple definition of an ADR other than that it is a mechanism that does not involve going to Court. The Law Reform Commission has published a Consultation Paper on Alternative Dispute Resolution (LRC CP 50-2008; www.lawreform.ie). This examines the principles underlying ADR and sets out proposals for improvements in the area.

The European Commission has been encouraging the development of ADR mechanisms, particularly for dealing with consumer disputes. There are a number of ADR networks which may help consumers to enforce their rights in other EU member states. Information on ADR mechanisms in the EU is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/redress_cons/adr_en.htm

There is an EU Directive on Certain Aspects of Mediation in Civil and Commercial Matters which is due to come into force in 2011. It will apply to cross-border disputes only.

As stated, this booklet is aimed at individual users and consumers of goods and services. ADR mechanisms are being developed to enable businesses to resolve disputes between themselves but we do not deal with these in detail here.

Mediation

There is no legal definition of the term "mediation". It is a term that is used to describe a process whereby an independent third party becomes involved in a dispute and tries to establish areas of common ground. Ultimately, the mediator proposes an agreement which the parties can accept. This agreement may then constitute a contract between the parties. It is a voluntary process and neither side is bound by anything until the final proposals are agreed.

Mediation is significantly different from arbitration. The arbitration process is governed by legislation. Arbitration also involves an independent third party but generally that third party makes a ruling on the issue in contention and the parties using arbitration have generally agreed in advance to be bound by the outcome.

Advocacy services

Some people have more difficulty than others in enforcing their rights. Some voluntary organisations, including Citizens Information Services (CISs) and organisations representing particular groups, for example in the mental health area, currently provide advocacy services for people who are unable, for whatever reason, to pursue the issues themselves.



The Citizens Information Board supports a number of disability advocacy projects run by community and voluntary sector groups throughout the country.

Advocacy in this context means that a person is helped to establish rights and may be represented by an advocate in that the advocate speaks for the person or writes letters on his/her behalf. However, the advocate does not provide legal representation. The Citizens Information Board has specific responsibility for supporting the provision of information, advice and advocacy services for people seeking social services. The Government has deferred the establishment of a Personal Advocacy Service by the Citizens Information Board in the light of current budgetary circumstances.

Standards of service

Many organisations, especially those in the public sector, have put mechanisms in place to improve the standard of delivery of services. A number of Charters of Rights have been published which, while they are not legally binding, do provide a benchmark by which standards can be assessed. Government departments and some other government agencies have customer service action plans and their strategic plans include an emphasis on quality customer service – there is more information on these in the section on public services.

CHAPTER 1

MAKING A COMPLAINT OR APPEAL

How exactly you should pursue a complaint or appeal depends very much on the issue involved and the body which deals with it. Some complaints can be dealt with very informally and at a local level. Others may require professional help from, for example, a lawyer or accountant. How you make a complaint about aspects of a public service depends, in some cases, on the legislation governing the service. See Chapter 4 for more on public services. There are certain general principles that should help you to make a successful complaint or appeal.

Consumer complaints

In some areas, there is no specific body to deal with your complaint. For example, if you have a complaint about prices, you may complain to the retailer or supplier but, as prices are not controlled by law, you have no further avenue of complaint. You may complain to the Competition Authority if all the suppliers are charging the same prices because this may constitute anti-competitive behaviour. You may complain to the National Consumer Agency if prices are not properly displayed. If you buy faulty goods, you should complain to the retailer. If you fail to get satisfaction, then in general your only recourse is to the Courts – the Small Claims Court is particularly important here. If a contractor (for example, a plumber or carpenter) provides an unsatisfactory service, you should complain directly and, if you fail to get satisfaction, you may complain to the appropriate trade body if there is one. If there is not, then your only recourse is to the Courts.



The following are some general guidelines for handling consumer complaints:

Is it worth pursuing?

Consider whether or not redress is possible or worth pursuing. Some wrongs cannot be put right or can only be put right at a very high cost in time, money and stress.

Start at the least formal level

If you think a government department has made a mistake, ring or write to them and see can the problem be solved without using any further appeal system; if goods you have bought are of poor quality, go to the shop where you bought them and see can you get redress; if you get poor service in a restaurant, ask to speak to the manager. If an informal approach does not work to your satisfaction, you should then complain to the appropriate complaints body if there is one.

Don't delay

There are time limits for taking certain procedures but, even where this is not the case, it is easier for you and the person or body about whom you are complaining to deal with recent events.

Keep or get all relevant documents

It is generally helpful if you write down what happened immediately and keep this document. You should keep receipts for consumer goods. If you need to access documents, you may be able to get them either under the Freedom of Information legislation (see page 11) or the Data Protection legislation (see page 27).

Clarify the precise basis for your complaint

Your complaint is likely to be much more effective if you are very clear about the issue and if you do not allow other unrelated issues to cloud it. If there are options for redress, be clear about which option you want.

Check which is the appropriate complaints body

Get help from the various information sources listed below if you are unsure. In some cases, there is no relevant complaints body and you may then have to consider taking a case to court.

Get help if it is available

For example, you may be able to get help from your trade union if you have a work-related problem; you may get help from the Equality Authority if you are taking a case to the Equality Tribunal and you may get help from a Citizens Information Service in a range of areas.

Consider whether or not you need professional help

This depends on the nature of the complaint and the procedures adopted by the complaints body.



CHAPTER 2

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

In order to enforce your rights, you need to know what they are. Virtually all of the bodies listed in this guide provide routine information about their activities. Many of the public bodies are subject to Freedom of Information legislation and are obliged to provide comprehensive information and to give you access to any personal information that they have about you.

Citizens Information

Citizens Information Services (CISs) provide free, confidential and impartial information on all aspects of rights and entitlements. A nationwide network of 42 CISs delivers information from 262 locations. Each CIS is an independent organisation but all are supported by the Citizens Information Board. A list of the 42 CISs appears on page 108.

Citizens Information is also available online at www.citizensinformation.ie. You can also call the Citizens Information Phone Service (CIPS) on Lo-call 1890 777 121 or contact CIPS by email at information@citizensinformation.ie. The phone service is available from Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 9.00pm.

Freedom of Information

Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts, government departments, the Health Service Executive, local authorities and a range of other government bodies, as well as some voluntary agencies which are contracted to provide services, are obliged to publish information on their activities and to make personal information available to individuals.

Duties of public bodies

All public bodies covered by the legislation are obliged to publish information about their activities and about the rules and practices they use in decision-making. The sort of information about the activities of the public body which must be made available includes:

- A general description of its structure and organisation, functions, powers and duties, the services it provides to the public and the procedures by which the public can avail of those services
- A general description of the kinds of records held by it; the arrangements made to enable people to access information and records and to correct personal information if this arises
- Information that may assist people in exercising their rights under FOI

This information is usually contained in the public body's Section 15 manual.

Public bodies are also obliged to publish the rules, procedures, guidelines and practices they use when making decisions and information on how schemes administered by them are run. This information is published in their Section 16 manuals.

Most of the bodies concerned have their Section 15 and 16 manuals available on their websites. Paper copies are sometimes available as well but there is no obligation to provide them in any particular format. Public bodies covered by the legislation have a nominated person as the FOI Officer.



Personal information

You are entitled to access personal information held about you by a public body which is covered by the FOI legislation. You are also entitled to have that information corrected if it is not accurate. The public body must assist you to access it. If you have a disability, the public body must facilitate you to exercise your rights. There are clear rules about the time limits within which the information must be made available and, if you are not satisfied with the information provided, there is an internal review procedure in each public body. If you are still not satisfied you may appeal to the Information Commissioner.

The Data Protection Commissioner (see page 27) also has a role in providing access to personal information.

Office of the Information Commissioner

18 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 223 030 **Tel:** (01) 639 5689 **Fax:** (01) 639 5676

Email: info@oic.ie **Web:** www.oic.gov.ie

The Information Commissioner investigates complaints of non-compliance with the FOI legislation and generally promotes a freedom of information culture in the public service.

Commissioner for Environmental Information

The Information Commissioner is also the Commissioner for Environmental Information (CEI). The role of the CEI is to decide appeals taken by members of the public who are not satisfied with the outcome of their requests for environmental information.

CHAPTER 3

THE COURTS SYSTEM

Courts Service

Phoenix House, 15-24 Phoenix Street North, Smithfield, Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 888 6000

Web: www.courts.ie

Everyone has a right of access to the courts, and in some cases legal aid may be available. You have the right to represent yourself in court but this is not always wise. In certain cases, you have the right to make representations to the court even if you are not a party to the proceedings – for example, you may object to the granting or renewal of a pub licence. In this chapter we briefly describe the civil jurisdiction of the courts. Some personal injury cases must first be referred to the Personal Injuries Assessment Board – now known as Injuriesboard.ie.

Personal Injuries Assessment Board/Injuriesboard.ie

Postal address: Injuriesboard.ie, P.O. Box 8, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

Lo-call: 1890 829 121 Fax: 1890 829 122

Email: enquiries@injuriesboard.ie Web: www.injuriesboard.ie

This is the statutory body which assesses compensation for personal injuries in the following civil actions:

- Employer's liability – if you take an action against your employer because of negligence or breach of duty during employment
- Motor vehicle actions
- Public liability – that is, if you take an action against a property owner because of injuries which occurred while you were using the property concerned



All relevant cases must be referred to the Board. You may not take a claim to court without the authorisation of the Board. Either side is entitled to have legal advice if they wish but the lawyers are not directly involved in the process. The costs of any legal advice are not awarded against either party. In order to reduce the need for legal advice, the Board operates a helpline for claimants, which is open on Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. This gives help with, among other things, filling up the forms. You do not have to accept the ruling of the PIAB. If you do not accept it, you will be authorised to take a court case.

District Court

The State is divided into 23 districts and each has at least one District Judge allocated. There are over two hundred locations for District Court sittings. In civil cases the District Court can award damages of up to €6,348.69. This court also has power to make various family law orders such as maintenance, custody and access and barring orders. It grants certain licences such as a licence to extend the opening hours of pubs in the area, dance licences and lottery licences. You are entitled to object to the award of such licences. You have the right to appeal to the Circuit Court against any decision of the District Court. The case is heard in the Circuit Court as if it were a brand new case. People quite often appear in the District Court without a solicitor or barrister. If you want to start an action in the District Court you can go along to the Clerk of the Court and you will be told how to go about it.

Small Claims Court

The Small Claims Court is not a separate court but a special procedure which is available in the District Court in cases where the claim is less than €2,000.

It is a cheap and speedy means of resolving disputes about goods and services. You do not need a solicitor. You can get an application form from

your local District Court office, or else download it or fill it in online at www.courts.ie, and return it to the Small Claims Registrar with a fee of €15. The Small Claims Registrar then tries to solve the dispute without a court hearing. If this does not succeed, the case goes to the District Court for a hearing. There is no further charge for a hearing and you do not need legal assistance.

The regulation on the European Small Claims Procedure will come into effect on 1 January 2009. This will allow small claims (up to €2,000) in cross-border proceedings to be dealt with in a similar manner to other claims in the Small Claims Court.

Circuit Court

There are eight circuits in the State. A judge of the Circuit Court travels to towns within the circuit to hear cases. In civil cases the maximum damages which the Circuit Court can award is €38,092.14. The Circuit Court also deals with family law including judicial separation and divorce. It has a range of functions in relation to licensing, including the granting of new pub licences. You may appeal to the High Court against a decision of the Circuit Court in a civil case.

You may appear in the Circuit Court without legal representation but it is unusual to do so. The County Registrar will tell you about the procedure if you intend to represent yourself and the judge may help you in the court.

High Court

The High Court can award unlimited damages in civil cases. So, if you expect to get damages of more than €38,092.14 you should take your case to the High Court. The High Court also deals with Wards of Court, the winding-up of companies (for example, appointment of receivers and liquidators), and injunctions in, for example, labour disputes. It may be



consulted on points of law by the lower courts. It is the court in which you may argue that legislation is contrary to the Constitution. It is also the court in which you can look for a judicial review of government actions.

It is possible, but it would be difficult, for you to take an action in the High Court without legal representation.

Supreme Court

This is the highest domestic court. You may appeal to it against most decisions of the High Court. The President is the only person who can go directly to the Supreme Court – s/he may ask it to look into the constitutionality of legislation which s/he has been asked to sign. Other people only get to the Supreme Court after going through one of the lower courts.

Court of Justice of the European Communities

If a question of interpretation of any EU law arises in the domestic courts then it may be referred to the Court of Justice for a ruling. That ruling is binding on our courts. Individuals have limited rights of direct access to this Court.

Court of Justice of the EC

L-2925 Luxembourg

Web: http://curia.europa.eu/en/infosprat/index_contacts.htm

European Court of Human Rights

Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg-Cedex, France

Tel: (00 333) 8841 2018 **Fax:** (00 333) 8841 2730

Web: www.echr.coe.int

The European Court of Human Rights is NOT an EU institution. It is associated with the Council of Europe and it is the court which adjudicates on the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

You can now complain about any breach of the ECHR at any domestic court. If you fail, you may take a case to the European Court of Human Rights.

The European Convention on Human Rights

Under the European Convention on Human Rights Act 2003, the courts in Ireland are obliged to interpret and apply any statutory provision or rule of law in a manner that is compatible with the State's obligations under the Convention. This means that all laws (including subsidiary laws such as statutory instruments and bye-laws) and all common law rules must be interpreted and applied in such a way that they do not result in any breach of your rights under the Convention.

So, if you are appearing in court, in a criminal or civil case, and you consider that the law which is being applied is in breach of your rights under the European Convention, then you may raise the question and the court has to interpret and apply the law in a way which is compatible with the Convention. This applies to all the courts. You may appeal the court decision in the normal way. The High Court and the Supreme Court have the power to make a declaration that a statutory provision is incompatible with the State's obligations under the Convention. This will not automatically mean that the law in question is invalid. The law may continue in force. The Taoiseach must bring all such declarations to the attention of the Oireachtas within 21 days. The Oireachtas is not obliged to change the law but it is likely to do so. If you were involved in the proceedings where the declaration was made, you may write to the Attorney General looking for compensation for any loss or damage



suffered as a result of the incompatibility. The Government may decide to make you an *ex-gratia* payment. An *ex-gratia* payment is, by definition, discretionary so the legislation does not specify if or when a payment should be made, nor does it specify any amount. However, the principles which have been applied by the Court of Human Rights must be taken into account. That Court tends to award modest compensation.

Legal Aid Board

Head Office, Quay St, Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry

Lo-call: 1890 615 200 **Tel:** (066) 947 1000 **Fax:** (066) 947 1035

Email: info@legalaidboard.ie **Web:** www.legalaidboard.ie

The Legal Aid Board is a statutory body which administers the civil legal aid scheme. The Board has a number of Law Centres throughout Ireland. A list of the law centres is available from the Board or from your local Citizens Information Centre. You may qualify for legal aid if you pass a means test.

Refugee Legal Service

Timberlay House, 79-83 Lower Mount St, Dublin 2

Freephone: 1800 229 222 **Tel:** (01) 646 9600 **Fax:** (01) 661 5011

Email: dublinrls@legalaidboard.ie **Web:** www.legalaidboard.ie

Also: 48-49 North Brunswick Street/George's Lane, Dublin 7

Freephone: 1800 238 343 **Tel:** (01) 646 9600 **Fax:** (01) 671 0200

Cork Office: North Quay House, Pope's Quay, Cork

Freephone: 1800 202 420 **Tel:** (021) 455 4634 **Fax:** (021) 455 7622

Email: corkrls@legalaidboard.ie

Galway Office: Seville House, New Dock Road, Galway
Freephone: 1800 502 400 **Tel:** (091) 562 480 **Fax:** (091) 562 599
Email: rlsgalway@legalaidboard.ie

The Refugee Legal Service is an office established by the Legal Aid Board to provide confidential and independent legal services to people applying for asylum in Ireland. Legal aid and advice may also be provided on immigration and deportation matters.

Independent Monitoring Committee

P.O. Box 9169, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 616 7859

Web: www.legalaidboard.ie/lab/publishing.nsf/content/Independent_Monitoring_Committee

The Independent Monitoring Committee monitors the quality and availability of the legal services being provided by the Refugee Legal Service to asylum seekers. Asylum seekers may complain to the Committee if they are dissatisfied with the services they receive.

The criminal law

Crimes are normally prosecuted by the Garda Síochána or the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). It is possible to bring private prosecutions in certain limited circumstances. If you are unhappy about a decision of the Garda or the DPP in relation to a prosecution, you can complain to the Garda or the DPP.



Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)

14-16 Upper Merrion St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 678 9222 Fax: (01) 661 0915

Web: www.dppireland.ie

The Office of the DPP will not accept correspondence relating to criminal prosecution files by email. You should contact the Office by post.

You may write to the DPP if you are:

- A victim of a crime
- A family member of a victim of a crime
- An accused person, or
- A family member of an accused person

Lawyers, doctors and social workers may also write on behalf of their clients.

It is against the law for anybody else to contact the DPP to attempt to influence a decision to withdraw or not to start a prosecution.

The DPP's office has traditionally had a policy of not giving reasons for decisions not to prosecute. It has now been decided that the office will give reasons for decisions not to prosecute in cases involving deaths where the alleged offence occurs on or after 22 October 2008. Reasons will be given in writing where possible and will be given, if requested, to members of a deceased person's family or household. Reasons will not be given to the public. This policy is due to operate until January 2010 at least.

CHAPTER 4

PUBLIC SERVICES

Everyone uses public services at some stage. Your rights in relation to access to public services may arise in a number of ways. There are certain civil and human rights which are available to every person; there are some rights which are available only to citizens. You also have rights as a consumer or customer of public services – these are based on the legislation setting up the service, on the terms of any contract you have with the service provider, on consumer rights generally as well as on human and civil rights. In this section, we are concerned with broad public rights and with the bodies which can enforce those rights. In general, if you have a complaint, you should first of all contact the body concerned. It may be possible to have your complaint dealt with informally. If this is not satisfactory, you may then use the more formal procedures described here.

OECD review

Following the recent review by the OECD of the Irish public service, the Government set up a Task Force on the Public Service, which reported in November 2008. As part of the strategy arising from the work of the Task Force, customer satisfaction with service providers in each part of the public service will be measured systematically on an ongoing basis. All public service organisations will publish customer charters, and existing charters will be revised to include new commitments to improve specific services.

Quality standards of public service

The Ombudsman (see page 24) has a significant role in ensuring that your rights are enforced. The Office of the Ombudsman is also involved in promoting standards of service. *The Ombudsman's Guide to Standards of Best Practice for Public Servants* in their dealings with the public and the *Guide to Internal Complaints Systems* set out the standards that should apply.



Quality customer service

Government departments and offices publish Customer Service Action Plans and Customer Charters. The current plans are for the period 2005-2008.

The Customer Service Action Plans are based on 12 principles of quality customer service. Among these is a requirement to maintain a well publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided. Departments and offices are also required to maintain a formalised system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services. A customer charter is a short statement describing the level of service a customer can expect from a Government department or office. Each Government department and office is required to produce a customer charter and to report in its annual report on performance against the service standards set out in the charter.

An evaluation report on customer charters was published in July 2007. A Task Force on Customer Service was appointed to prepare a response to the recommendations made in the report, to take a co-ordinated approach to strengthen quality customer service initiatives in the public service and to advance the specific customer service commitments in the Programme for Government. It is expected to report in the near future. For more information, see: www.bettergov.ie

Standards of service in local authorities

The Local Government Act 2001 sets out the obligations of local authorities towards citizens, national government and other agencies. These include an obligation on county and town councils to take steps to promote the objective of unified and improved customer service for the public. Local authorities are also required to prepare corporate plans after each election. Customer service plans must be included in these

corporate plans. Local authority elections were last held in June 2004 and must be held again by June 2009 at the latest.

Service indicators in local authorities

Local authorities have been issued with a list of items by which they must measure their services. These are designed to measure performance in a number of areas – for example, how long it takes to let an empty dwelling, the time taken to mobilise a fire brigade, the percentage of drinking water which meets the statutory quality standards and the number of items lent by the library service.

The Department of the Environment has issued customer complaints guidelines for local authorities. The authorities are expected to implement these guidelines and ensure an effective complaints system.

General enforcement bodies

There are a number of general enforcement bodies for citizens and users of public services.

Office of the Ombudsman

18 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 223 030 **Tel:** (01) 639 5600 **Fax:** (01) 639 5674

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie

Web: www.ombudsman.gov.ie

The Ombudsman is a statutory office. Its main function is to investigate complaints from members of the public who feel that they have been unfairly treated by certain public services. These services are government departments and offices; local authorities; the HSE; voluntary hospitals and certain voluntary agencies which provide services on behalf of the HSE; and An Post. At present, the Ombudsman's remit covers fewer public



bodies than that of the Information Commissioner. The Ombudsman (Amendment) Bill 2008 proposes to extend the remit of the Ombudsman to a range of other public bodies, bringing it into line with the remit of the Information Commissioner.

Any individual may complain to the Ombudsman. Generally speaking, you must have exhausted the existing complaints machinery – for example, if you have a complaint about the Department of Social and Family Affairs you should go through the normal appeals processes before contacting the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman may not investigate:

- The actions of private companies or individuals
- Complaints relating to recruitment, pay and conditions of employment
- Court decisions
- The actions of the Garda Síochána or actions taken in the running of the prisons
- Matters which are already the subject of court proceedings or where the person has a specific right, in law, to appeal to the courts
- Matters where there is a right of appeal to an independent tribunal or appeal body such as the Income Tax Appeals Commissioners or the Employment Appeals Tribunal
- The “reserved functions” of local authorities – that means those functions which are exercised exclusively by the elected members of local authorities
- Actions taken solely in the exercise of clinical judgement by doctors
- Actions of semi-state bodies other than An Post
- The Houses of the Oireachtas (you may not complain to the Ombudsman about your TD)

The social welfare appeals machinery is within the public service so it is not excluded. This means that the Ombudsman may investigate issues which have been through the social welfare appeals system.

The Ombudsman's *Guide to Standards of Best Practice for Public Servants* in their dealings with the public and the *Guide to Internal Complaints Systems* set out the standards that should apply in the provision of public services.

Office of the Ombudsman for Children

Millennium House, 52-56 Great Strand St, Dublin 1

Freephone: 1800 202 040 **Tel:** (01) 865 6800

Email: oco@oco.ie **Web:** www.oco.ie

The Ombudsman for Children is a statutory office whose main functions are:

- To promote the rights and welfare of children
- To investigate complaints made by children or on behalf of children against public bodies, schools and public hospitals

The bodies that may be investigated include government departments, the HSE, local authorities, schools and voluntary hospitals. Areas such as the courts, the Garda Síochána, the asylum process, the Adoption Board, the Defence Forces and the prison service are not subject to the Ombudsman's investigation. The usual complaints and appeals machinery must be used first and the Ombudsman for Children may not investigate complaints where legal proceedings have started.

In general, "children" means everyone under the age of 18.



The Ombudsman may investigate a complaint by a child or by a parent of the child or any other person who by reason of their relationship with the child (including professional relationship) has an interest in the rights and welfare of the child. If the complaint is made to the Ombudsman for Children by a child, or on behalf of a child by a person other than a parent, the Ombudsman must inform one parent of the complaint before starting an investigation.

Human Rights Commission

4th Floor, Jervis House, Jervis St, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 858 9601 **Fax:** (01) 858 9609

Email: info@ihrc.ie **Web:** www.ihrc.ie

The Human Rights Commission is a statutory body which aims to ensure that the human rights of all people in Ireland are fully realised and protected, in law, in policy and in practice. Its functions include:

- Keeping under review the adequacy and effectiveness of law and practice in relating to the protection of human rights
- Conducting enquiries – it may do this at the request of an individual
- Taking legal proceedings to vindicate human rights or providing legal assistance to people to do this

Budget 2009 provides that the Human Rights Commission and the Equality Authority are to fully integrate their facilities, back office and administrative services and access for citizens. There are no proposals to change the remit of either organisation.

Data Protection Commissioner

Canal House, Station Road, Portarlinton, Co. Laois

Lo-call: 1890 252 231 **Tel:** (057) 868 4800 **Fax:** (057) 868 4757

Email: info@dataprotection.ie **Web:** www.dataprotection.ie

The Data Protection Commissioner is a statutory office which implements the Data Protection Acts. The main aim of these Acts is to protect the privacy of individuals about whom there is personal information on computer or in paper files.

If someone or some organisation holds personal information about you on computer or in paper files, you may ask them if they hold such information and to give you access to it. If they refuse to do this, or if they refuse to correct this information or remove your name from a mailing list, or otherwise fail to respect your rights under the Acts, you may complain to the Commissioner. If the Data Protection Commissioner does not accept your complaint you may appeal to the Circuit Court against this decision within 21 days. If you suffer damage as a result of inaccurate information being kept on computer or in paper files, you may sue for damages through the courts.

Official Languages Commissioner/An Coimisinéir Teanga

An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe

Lo-call: 1890 504 006 **Tel:** (091) 504 006 **Fax:** (091) 504 036

Email: eolas@coimisineir.ie **Web:** www.coimisineir.ie

The Official Languages Commissioner is a statutory office whose main function is to monitor and ensure compliance by public bodies with the provisions of the Official Languages Act 2003. The Act aims to promote the use of Irish for official purposes. Among other things, the Commissioner may help you to implement your language rights.

Equality Authority

2 Clonmel St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 245 545 **Tel:** (01) 417 3333

Fax: (01) 417 3331 **Textphone:** (01) 417 3385

Email: info@equality.ie **Web:** www.equality.ie



The Equality Authority is a statutory body with a general remit to promote equality under the employment equality and equal status legislation. It provides assistance to people who consider they have been discriminated against in employment and related areas and in access to services on any of the following grounds – gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community – in vindicating their rights.

If you consider that you are being discriminated against on any of these nine grounds, the Authority may help you with your case.

Budget 2009 provides that the Equality Authority and the Human Rights Commission are to fully integrate their facilities, back office and administrative services and access for citizens. There are no proposals to change the remit of either organisation.

Equality Tribunal

3 Clonmel St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 344 424 **Tel:** (01) 477 4100 **Fax:** (01) 477 4141

Email: info@equalitytribunal.ie **Web:** www.equalitytribunal.ie

The Equality Tribunal is a statutory office that investigates and/or mediates on disputes in relation to the implementation of the employment equality and equal status legislation. It employs Equality Officers to investigate complaints. You may complain about discrimination on a number of grounds – gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, religion, race and membership of the Traveller community. The alleged discrimination may arise in employment, provision of services, disposal of goods and property and education.

Having investigated the matter, the Tribunal may order a particular course of action or may order compensation. The Tribunal's decisions are legally binding. Its decisions under the Equal Status Act may be appealed to the Circuit Court within 42 days. Decisions under the Employment Equality Act may be appealed to the Labour Court.

The Equality Tribunal has no role in relation to alleged discrimination by registered clubs or licensed premises. Such cases must be taken to the District Court.

You may get assistance from the Equality Authority to take a case to the Equality Tribunal or to the District Court.

National Disability Authority

25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 608 0400 **Fax:** (01) 660 9935

Email: nda@nda.ie **Web:** www.nda.ie

The NDA is a statutory body that assists in the co-ordination and development of disability policy. Among other things, it sets standards and monitors services for people with disabilities.

If the NDA considers that programmes or services that are being provided on a statutory basis or are supported by public money are not adequate or satisfactory, it must inform the service provider of this. It may also recommend to the Minister that the provision of public funding be reviewed or discontinued.



PUBLIC OFFICES AND ELECTIONS

Standards in Public Office Commission

18 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 639 5666 **Fax:** (01) 639 5684

Email: sipo@ombudsman.gov.ie **Web:** www.sipo.gov.ie

The Standards in Public Office Commission is a statutory body, which supervises compliance with the Ethics in Public Office Acts and the Electoral Acts.

It supervises compliance with the Ethics Acts as they apply to office-holders (for example, the Taoiseach, Ministers and Ministers of State), the Attorney General, Ministerial special advisers, senior civil servants and directors, and executives of certain public bodies.

(The Committees on Members' Interests of the Dáil and Seanad deal with members of those Houses who are not office-holders – that is, Senators and backbench TDs.)

The Commission monitors the rules in relation to:

- Disclosure of political donations
- Limits on donations and on spending at elections
- Reimbursement of expenses incurred by certain election candidates
- Public funding of political parties
- The Party Leader Allowance

Referendum Commission

18 Lower Leeson St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 639 5695 **Fax:** (01) 639 5674

Email: refcom@ombudsman.gov.ie **Web:** www.refcom.ie

The Referendum Commission is a statutory body which is appointed each time a referendum is called, and which dissolves one month after it has furnished its report. The primary role of the Referendum Commission is to explain the subject matter of referendum proposals, to promote public awareness of the referendum and to encourage the electorate to vote at the poll.

SOCIAL WELFARE

If you are not satisfied with a decision of the Department of Social and Family Affairs, you may ask to have the decision reviewed. You may do this by writing to the section of the Department which made the initial decision. This review is carried out informally. If you are still not satisfied, you may make a formal appeal.

Social Welfare Appeals Office

D'Olier House, D'Olier St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 747 434 **Tel:** (01) 671 8633 **Fax:** (01) 671 8391

Email: swappeals@welfare.ie **Web:** www.socialwelfareappeals.ie

The Social Welfare Appeals Office is a statutory office that deals with appeals in connection with social welfare payments. If you consider that you have been wrongly refused a benefit or that you were given a lower amount or that the wrong rate of PRSI was applied or, indeed, that any other decision of the Department of Social and Family Affairs is wrong, you can appeal to the Appeals Office. You should appeal within 21 days but you may appeal later if new information comes to light. Generally, the decision of an appeals officer is final. However, the Chief Appeals



Officer may refer an issue to the High Court for decision – you may ask for that to be done if you are unhappy, but the officer does not have to do as you ask. You may appeal to the High Court on a point of law or seek a judicial review in the High Court if you consider that the appeal was not fairly conducted. You would need legal advice for this.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office also deals with appeals in relation to the non-discretionary elements of the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme.

The Social Welfare Appeals Office does not deal with schemes that are not on a statutory basis – for example, the free schemes and the back to work schemes. There is no formal appeals system for these schemes but if you are not satisfied, you should ask for the decision to be reviewed. You may complain to the Ombudsman if you are dissatisfied with the outcome at the Social Welfare Appeals Office.

Social Welfare Tribunal

Floor 3, 157-164 Townsend St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 673 2266 / (01) 704 3000 **Fax:** (01) 673 2054

Web: www.welfare.ie/foi/socweltrib.html

This is also a statutory appeals system. It provides a second level of appeal (after the normal appeal) for those who are refused an unemployment payment because of an industrial dispute at their place of employment.

TAXATION

Tax Appeals Commissioners

8th Floor, Fitzwilton House, Wilton Place, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 662 4530 **Fax:** (01) 661 1892

Web: www.appealcommissioners.ie

The Tax Appeals Commissioners provide a statutory independent appeals system. Initial decisions on tax are usually made by the Inspector of Taxes. These decisions may relate to, among other things, an assessment of tax due or the amount of your tax credits. If you consider that any such decision is wrong, you may appeal to the Appeals Commissioners. You should first appeal in writing to the Inspector of Taxes within 30 days of the decision. If the matter is not sorted out, the appeal will be heard by an Appeals Commissioner. If you are unhappy with the Appeals Commissioner's decision you may appeal to the Circuit Court within 10 days for a rehearing. After that you may go to the High Court on a "case stated". You would need legal advice for this.

Internal/External Review

Inspector of Taxes (c/o your local District Tax Office).

Web: www.revenue.ie

The Internal/External Review process is a non-statutory procedure which you may use if you feel that your tax affairs have not been dealt with competently or fairly. If you ask for an internal review, your file is reviewed by the internal reviewer, who is a senior Revenue official. Alternatively you may ask for a joint review by the internal reviewer and an external reviewer. The external reviewer is independent of the Revenue Commissioners.

HEALTH SERVICES

General health services

Health Service Executive (HSE)

Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

Callsave: 1850 24 1850 **Tel:** (045) 880 400 **Fax:** 1890 200 893

Consumer affairs: Lo-call: 1890 424 555

Email: yoursay@hse.ie **Web:** www.hse.ie



There is a statutory complaints procedure for general health services. This applies to actions or failures to act by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and by service providers who have contracts with the HSE to provide services. You may make a complaint about any action of the HSE or a service provider that:

- In your view, does not accord with fair or sound administrative practice and
- Adversely affects you or the person on whose behalf the complaint is made

In general, you must make your complaint within 12 months.

You are not entitled to complain about:

- A matter that is or has been the subject of legal proceedings before a court or tribunal
- A matter relating solely to the exercise of clinical judgment by a person acting on behalf of the HSE or a service provider
- An action taken by the HSE or a service provider solely on the advice of a person exercising clinical judgment
- A matter relating to the recruitment, appointment or terms and conditions of an employee or advisor of the HSE or a service provider
- A matter relating to the Social Welfare Acts – this means that matters relating to the Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme are not included but there is already a complaints system available for this scheme and people may then appeal to the Social Welfare Appeals Office

- A matter that could be the subject of an appeal under section 60 of the Civil Registration Act 2004 (this relates to the registration of births, marriages and deaths)
- A matter that could prejudice an investigation being undertaken by the Gardaí
- A matter that has been brought before any other statutory complaints procedure (this does not prevent a complaints officer dealing with a complaint that was made to the Ombudsman or the Ombudsman for Children)

You can complain by filling in a “*Your service, your say*” form at any HSE location and putting it in a feedback box; talking to any member of HSE staff, the service manager or the complaints officer; emailing yoursay@hse.ie; or sending a letter or fax to any HSE location. For contact details of the complaints officer relevant to your situation, phone the HSE information line on **1850 24 1850**.

The HSE complaints officers deal with the complaint and make a recommendation. You may then ask for a review of that recommendation and there is an internal review.

Service providers may put their own procedures in place by agreement with the HSE. It is a condition of the agreement between the HSE and service providers that each service provider will adhere to the HSE complaints procedure or establish its own complaints procedures. It is also a condition that the service provider will co-operate with the HSE in any review of a complaints officer's recommendation following the investigation of a complaint against the service provider.

Disability services

There is a separate statutory complaints and appeals procedure for assessment of needs under the Disability Act 2005.



You may complain to the HSE about any of the following:

- A decision by the assessment officer that you do not have a disability
- The failure to carry out the assessment in accordance with standards set by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)
- The failure to carry out the assessment within the time limits
- The contents of the service statement provided to you
- The failure to provide a service specified in the service statement

If you are not satisfied, you may appeal to an independent appeals officer.

You may appeal to the appeals officer against:

- A finding or a recommendation of the complaints officer
- The failure of the HSE or education service provider to implement a complaints officer's recommendations

There is a further appeal to the Circuit Court.

Disability Appeals Officer

Freepost, 1st Floor, Dolcain House, Monastery Road, Clondalkin, Dublin 22

Callsave: 1850 211 583 **Tel:** (01) 461 4211 **Web:** www.odaio.ie

Nursing home subventions

There is a statutory right of appeal against the refusal of a nursing home subvention on the basis of means. You may appeal to an Appeals Office of the HSE. There is no appeal in relation to the medical aspects of the subvention.

It is proposed that the new Nursing Homes Support Scheme, which is expected to come into effect in 2009, will have a statutory appeals process.

Supplementary Welfare Allowance appeals

The Supplementary Welfare Allowance scheme is actually a social welfare scheme but is currently operated by the HSE. It is intended to transfer it to the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Its main elements come under the Social Welfare Appeals system – see above. Its discretionary elements – for example, exceptional needs payments – are not covered by the Social Welfare Appeals system but are covered by the HSE complaints procedure.

Hospitals

Most hospitals have Patient Services Managers to whom you can complain if you consider that the hospital has not provided adequate services. The manager does not deal with complaints about the clinical judgement of doctors but does deal with complaints about delays in treatment and general standards of service.

The Charter of Rights for Hospital Patients sets out the rights of patients and the redress that may be available. It is not legally enforceable. Public hospitals and voluntary hospitals are subject to the Freedom of Information legislation, but private hospitals are not.

Mental Health Commission

St Martin's House, Waterloo Road, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 636 2400 **Fax:** (01) 636 2440

Email: info@mhcirl.ie **Web:** www.mhcirl.ie

The Mental Health Commission is a statutory body whose main purpose is to promote, encourage and foster the establishment and maintenance of high standards and good practices in the delivery of mental health services and to take all reasonable steps to protect the interests of people who are detained in approved centres. The Commission is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the involuntary detention of patients in



psychiatric hospitals and units. It arranges a scheme of legal aid for such patients. It is involved in setting standards and preparing codes of practice for psychiatric hospitals and units.

The Inspector of Mental Health Services is appointed by the Commission. The Inspector visits and inspects approved psychiatric centres every year and monitors compliance with the law. Complaints about psychiatric services may be made to the Commission and/or to the Inspector.

Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)

Webworks Building, Eglinton St, Cork

Tel: (021) 425 0610

Email: info@hiqa.ie **Web:** www.hiqa.ie

The Health Information and Quality Authority is a statutory body. It has a range of functions including setting and monitoring standards of safety and quality in relation to services provided by the HSE or associated service providers (but not mental health services) under the Health Acts, the Child Care Acts and the Children Act 2001 and services provided by nursing homes.

HIQA published its Draft National Quality Standards for residential services for people with disabilities in September 2008.

Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services

Floor 3, Morrison Chambers, 32 Nassau St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 604 1780 **Fax:** (01) 604 1799

The Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services is a statutory office within HIQA.

It has responsibility for inspecting statutory children's residential centres and special care units. It is expected to take over responsibility for inspection of public and private nursing homes and a number of other institutions.

You can complain to HIQA or the Chief Inspector of Social Services if you feel that there has been a breach of the relevant standards.

Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Medical Board of Appeal

c/o National Rehabilitation Hospital, Rochestown Avenue,

Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Tel: (01) 235 5279 **Fax:** (01) 285 4781 **Email:** disabled.drivers@nrh.ie

The Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Medical Board of Appeal is a statutory body. It deals with appeals in relation to the medical criteria for qualifying for benefits for drivers with a disability. It only deals with the medical aspects. It does not have a role in determining exactly what you are entitled to.

AGRICULTURE AND MARINE

Agriculture Appeals Office

Kilminchy Court, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

Lo-call: 1890 671 671 **Tel:** (057) 866 7167 **Fax:** (057) 866 7177

Email: appeals.office@agriculture.gov.ie **Web:** www.agriappeals.gov.ie

The Agriculture Appeals Office is a statutory body which deals with appeals from farmers who are unhappy with the decisions of the Department of Agriculture and Food about their entitlements under a range of schemes operated by the Department. You must appeal within three months of the decision. It is proposed to extend the remit



of the Office to decisions in respect of forestry and of the single payment scheme.

Single Payment Appeals Committee

Single Payment Unit, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
Government Offices, Old Abbeyleix Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois

Lo-call: 1890 200 506 **Tel:** (057) 867 4400

The Single Payment Appeals Committee is a non-statutory body which deals with appeals from farmers in relation to their entitlements under the Single Payments Scheme. The Committee includes Appeals Officers from the Agriculture Appeals Office.

Forest Service Appeals Unit

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford

Lo-call: 1890 200 223

The Forest Service Appeals Unit provides a non-statutory appeals procedure for decisions in relation to forestry.

Milk Quota Appeals Tribunal

c/o Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Kildare St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 607 2000

The Milk Quota Appeals Tribunal is a non-statutory body established to examine cases of particular difficulty arising from the implementation of the milk quota regime.

Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board

3rd Floor, Holbrook House, Holles St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 662 0331 **Fax:** (01) 662 0340

Email: info@alab.ie **Web:** www.alab.ie

The Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board is a statutory body which deals with appeals against decisions of the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on aquaculture licence applications. You can make an appeal within one month of a decision being published, or the revocation/amendment of a licence being notified.

JUSTICE, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DEFENCE

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission

150 Upper Abbey St, Dublin 1

Lo-call: 1890 600 800 **Fax:** (01) 814 7023

Email: info@gsoc.ie **Web:** www.gardaombudsman.ie

The Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission (GSOC) is a statutory body whose main function is to deal with complaints from the public concerning the conduct of Gardaí. You may complain about any conduct of a Garda which is alleged to be misbehaviour. Misbehaviour is conduct which constitutes an offence or a breach of discipline. Breach of discipline includes discourtesy, neglect of duty, falsehood or prevarication, abuse of authority, corrupt or improper practice, misuse of money or property in the custody of the Gardaí, being drunk or affected by drugs, and discreditable conduct.

The GSOC may refer less serious complaints for resolution by informal means. Both parties must agree in order for the complaint to be dealt with by mediation or informal resolution, but you can request a formal investigation at any stage.



In general, your complaint should be made within 6 months of the behaviour or incident being complained about.

Inspector of Prisons

1 Lower Grand Canal St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 661 0447 **Fax:** (01) 661 0559

Email: info@inspectorofprisons.gov.ie

The Office of the Inspector of Prisons is a statutory office. The Inspector's role is to inspect and report on prisons and places of detention. The Inspector does not investigate or adjudicate on complaints from individual prisoners.

Prison Visiting Committees

Prison Policy Division, Dept. of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
72-76 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 602 8202 **Web:** www.justice.ie

Each prison has a non-statutory Visiting Committee. Their role is not specifically to hear complaints but if you are dissatisfied with prison conditions you can write to them. If you are a prisoner you can also ask to meet with the Visiting Committee at one of their monthly visits. Each Prison Visiting Committee has a secretary or clerk on the prison staff.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal

13 Lower Hatch St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 661 0604 **Fax:** (01) 661 0598

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal is a non-statutory body which may pay *ex-gratia* compensation for expenses and losses incurred as a result of personal injury where the injury is directly attributable to a crime of violence.

The injured person or, if that person has died, the immediate family of the victim can claim compensation from the Tribunal. If you are responsible for looking after the victim and are out of pocket as a result of his or her injuries, you may claim compensation.

There is no time limit for making a claim in cases where the victim has died as a result of the injury inflicted. In other cases the time limit for making a claim is three months.

Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Pinebrooke House,
71-74 Harcourt St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 602 8681

Email: csvc@justice.ie **Web:** www.justice.ie

The Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime (CSVC) was set up to devise an appropriate support framework for victims of crime and disburse funding for the support of victims and assistance measures. It has now published a Framework Document which sets out how victims should be supported in the future. The Government has announced its intention to implement the proposals in this document.

National Crime Victims Helpline

Lo-call: 1850 211 407

The National Crime Victims Helpline is one of several organisations funded by the Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime and is supported by the Commission as a central point of contact for all victims of crime. Gardaí taking incident reports from victims are obliged to inform them of available support services and provide them with the Crime Victims Helpline number. Tourists who are victims of crime are referred to the Irish Tourist Assistance Service (ITAS) at **(01) 478 5295**.



Ombudsman for the Defence Forces

13-15 Lower Hatch St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 663 3222 **Fax:** (01) 663 3223

Email: admin@odf.ie **Web:** www.odf.ie

The Ombudsman for the Defence Forces is a statutory office which investigates complaints by members and former members of the Defence Forces. Generally, complaints must be made within a year of the action giving rise to the complaint or within a year of becoming aware of that action.

Serving members of the Defence Forces must make their complaint initially through the internal Defence Forces structures. If the complaint is not resolved within 28 days, they may then complain to the Ombudsman. Former members may complain directly to the Ombudsman.

PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Local authorities

The local authorities have primary responsibility for planning and for implementation of the planning laws. You may lodge an objection to any application for planning permission or complain to the local authority about a breach of planning laws.

An Bord Pleanála

64 Marlborough St, Dublin 1

Lo-call: 1890 275 175 **Tel:** (01) 858 8100 **Fax:** (01) 872 2684

Email: bord@pleanala.ie **Web:** www.pleanala.ie

An Bord Pleanála is the statutory body for dealing with appeals in relation to planning permissions. Generally there are charges for making an appeal.

In general, in order to be entitled to appeal, you must have been involved in the planning application when it was being considered by the planning authority - you may be an applicant for planning permission or you may be any other person, body or interested group who made submissions or observations in writing to the planning authority in relation to the planning application.

In general, you must appeal within four weeks of the date the decision was made by the planning authority.

Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland

3 Clonskeagh Square, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14

Tel: (01) 269 7766 **Fax:** (01) 269 7437

Email: rpii@rpii.ie **Web:** www.rpii.ie

The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland is the statutory body which deals with dangers to health from radiation and radioactive contamination of the environment. It provides information to the public on these issues, including information on radon gas. It is responsible for licensing the use, manufacture, distribution and disposal of various sources of ionising radiation.

Environmental Protection Agency

P.O. Box 3000, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford

Lo-call: 1890 335 599 **Tel:** (053) 916 0600

(Both of these numbers operate on a 24-hour basis. If you phone them outside working hours, you can opt to be switched through to the emergency operator.)

Fax: (053) 916 0699 **Email:** info@epa.ie **Web:** www.epa.ie



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the statutory agency charged with protecting the environment and enforcing environmental legislation. Among other things, it is responsible for:

- Implementation of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) licensing system and the waste licensing system (the local authorities license some waste activities)
- Advising, supporting and, in some cases, overseeing and directing the local authorities in their environmental control activities
- Monitoring the quality of air, water and soil; (the local authorities also have a monitoring role)
- Controlling and regulating the use and release of genetically modified organisms (GMOs)

The **Office of Environmental Enforcement (OEE)** is a section of the EPA which is specifically dedicated to the enforcement of environmental legislation. The OEE is based in Wexford. There are enforcement teams in Dublin, Cork and Mayo. **Email:** oee@epa.ie **Web:** www.epa.ie

South East Region

Environmental Protection Agency, P.O. Box 3000, Johnstown Castle Estate, Co. Wexford.

Lo-call: 1890 335 599 **Tel:** (053) 916 0600 **Fax:** (053) 916 0699

East/North East Region

Environmental Protection Agency, McCumiskey House, Richview, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14.

Tel: (01) 268 0100 **Fax:** (01) 268 0199

South/South West Region

Environmental Protection Agency, Inniscarra, Co. Cork

Tel: (021) 487 5540 **Fax:** (021) 487 5545

West/North West Region

Environmental Protection Agency, John Moore Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo

Tel: (094) 902 1588 **Fax:** (094) 902 1934

The licensing system

Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) and waste licences are granted by the EPA. You may object to a licence within 21 days. The EPA maintains registers of licence holders, and information about applications for licences is on the website.

The local authorities grant waste permits for certain waste disposal and recovery activities – you may make submissions about these to the local authority.

Complaints about pollution

In general, if you have a complaint about pollution (air, water, waste, noise) you should report it to your local authority.

If the subject matter of your complaint is licensed by the EPA, you should also report to the OEE office for your area. The list of licence holders and complaint forms are available on the EPA website. There are separate complaint forms for complaints about smell and any other pollution-related complaint. If the pollution arises from an activity which does not need a licence, you should report to the local authority. If the local authority fails to take action, you should complain to the OEE – the complaint form is available on the website.



Water supply

If you consider that there are problems with the water supply, you may ask the local authority to investigate. The local authority employs Environmental Health Officers, Sanitary Engineers and Water Engineers, all of whom have a role in this area.

The Water Services Act 2007 provides for a number of changes to the organisation and supervision of the water services.

Local authorities

There is no independent machinery for complaints about local authority services. All local authorities should have internal complaints procedures. You may, of course complain about local authorities to the Ombudsman. If you want to complain about housing services, water supply or any other service provided by a local authority, you should write to the City or County Manager. Addresses of all local authorities and their different sections are in the State Services section of the telephone directory.

HOUSING

Local authorities

Some local authorities employ Housing Welfare Officers who may be able to help you if you have housing problems.

Private Residential Tenancies Board

Floor 2, O'Connell Bridge House, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 635 0600 **Fax:** (01) 635 0601

Email: information@prtb.ie **Web:** www.prtb.ie

The Private Residential Tenancies Board is a statutory body. Its main functions are to resolve disputes between landlords and tenants, to operate a national tenancy registration system and provide information

and policy advice on the private rented sector. The dispute resolution service involves mediation, adjudication and tenancy tribunal hearings and replaces the courts for the majority of landlord and tenant disputes.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

There is a statutory appeals system for certain educational decisions but there is no formal system for most complaints. You should complain to the school principal and the Board of Management if you are not satisfied with, for example, the quality of teaching, the level of supervision or the availability of subjects.

Appeals Administration Unit

Department of Education and Science, Marlborough St, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 889 6400

Web: www.education.ie

Parents and students aged 18 or over have a statutory right to appeal certain decisions made by a school board of management or by someone on behalf of the board of management. The appeal is to the Secretary-General of the Department of Education and Science. The decisions which may be appealed include expulsion, suspension for 20 school days or more and refusal to enrol. Generally appeals must be made within 42 days of the decision.

The National Educational Welfare Board has the right to appeal in cases where the school permanently excludes, suspends, or refuses to enrol a student.

National Educational Welfare Board

16-22 Green St, Dublin 7

Lo-call: 1890 363 666 **Tel:** (01) 873 8700 **Fax:** (01) 873 8799

Email: info@newb.ie **Web:** www.newb.ie



The National Educational Welfare Board is a statutory body which is responsible for ensuring that children attend school or otherwise receive an appropriate education. It has drawn up a set of guidelines for schools on developing and implementing effective codes of behaviour.

School Transport Appeals Board

Department of Education and Science, Portlaoise Road,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly

Tel: (057) 932 4351 **Fax:** (057) 932 5409

The School Transport Appeals Board is a non-statutory board which hears appeals from students and parents who are not satisfied with the school transport service. Appeal forms are available from schools.

National Council for Special Education

1-2 Mill St, Trim, Co. Meath

Tel: (046) 948 6400 **Fax:** (046) 948 6404

Email: info@ncse.ie **Web:** www.ncse.ie

The National Council for Special Education is a statutory body whose main function is plan and co-ordinate the provision of education and support services to children with special educational needs.

Special Education Appeals Board

The Special Education Appeals Board is a statutory body which will deal with appeals under the provisions of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act 2004. This Act is not yet fully implemented and implementation has been postponed until an unknown date.

State Examinations Commission

Cornamaddy, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

Tel: (090) 644 2700 **Fax:** (090) 644 2744

Email: info@examinations.ie **Web:** www.examinations.ie

The State Examinations Commission is a statutory body which is responsible for the development, assessment, accreditation and certification of the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate. Complaints about these examinations may be made to the Commission.

FÁS Client Services Co-ordinator

c/o Legal Services, FÁS Head Office, 27-33 Upper Baggot St, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 607 0500 **Fax:** (01) 607 0600

Clients using FÁS services can make a complaint to their immediate supervisor. If the complaint is unresolved it should be referred to the FÁS Client Services Co-ordinator. If the complaint is still unresolved it should be taken to the FÁS Client Services Commissioner.

FÁS Client Services Commissioner

P.O. Box 5656, 27-33 Upper Baggot St, Dublin 4.

The FÁS Client Services Commissioner deals with unresolved complaints between FÁS and its clients. Clients include trainees, Community Employment participants, people looking for training, community groups and companies.



IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM

Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service

13/14 Burgh Quay, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 551 500 **Tel:** (01) 616 7700

Web: www.inis.gov.ie

The rules governing immigration and asylum will be changed when the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008 is enacted. At present, there are no statutory arrangements for appeals in respect of visas and immigration generally. There is a statutory appeals process for asylum seekers. The Bill will provide for an internal review mechanism in relation to visas and residence permits and there may be a statutory appeals mechanism at a later stage. At present, you may appeal the refusal of a visa to an internal visa appeals officer.

Refugee Appeals Tribunal

6-7 Hanover St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 210 458 **Tel:** (01) 474 8400

Web: www.refappeal.ie

If you are refused refugee status you may appeal to the Refugee Appeals Tribunal. This will be replaced by the Protection Review Tribunal when the Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill 2008 comes into effect. It will hear appeals in relation to refusal of refugee status and against the refusal of subsidiary protection. See page 19 for details of the Refugee Legal Service.

CHAPTER 5

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND LABOUR AGENCIES

Labour Relations Commission

Tom Johnson House, Haddington Road, Dublin 4

Lo-call: 1890 220 227 **Tel:** (01) 613 6700 **Fax:** (01) 613 6701

Email: labrc@iol.ie **Web:** www.lrc.ie

The Labour Relations Commission (LRC) is a statutory body which aims to promote the improvement of industrial relations. If you have problems in this area you may ask the Commission to provide its services to help resolve the dispute. The Commission provides a conciliation service, an advisory, development and research service and the Rights Commissioner service.

Rights Commissioner Service

Tom Johnson House, Haddington Road, Dublin 4

Lo-call: 1890 220 227 **Tel:** (01) 613 6700 **Fax:** (01) 613 6701

Web: www.lrc.ie

The Rights Commissioners are a service of the LRC but they are independent in their operations. Most of their work concerns individual grievances. They investigate breaches of a range of employment legislation. You may appeal against a Rights Commissioner's recommendation to the Labour Court; the Court's decision is then binding.



Labour Court

Tom Johnson House, Haddington Road, Dublin 4

Lo-call: 1890 220 228 **Tel:** (01) 613 6666 **Fax:** (01) 613 6667

Email: info@labourcourt.ie **Web:** www.labourcourt.ie

The Labour Court is a statutory tribunal which may investigate industrial disputes in certain circumstances. You may also appeal to it against decisions of a Rights Commissioner (see above) or an Equality Officer (see below).

The Labour Court hears both sides of an industrial relations dispute and then issues a recommendation. In general, recommendations are not legally binding. The Court does make legally binding rulings in cases involving breaches of registered employment agreements. It also makes legally binding determinations under a range of legislation including the Employment Equality Act, the Pensions Act, the Organisation of Working Time Act, the National Minimum Wage Act, the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act and the Protection of Employees (Fixed-Term Work) Act.

National Employment Rights Authority

O'Brien Road, Carlow

Lo-call: 1890 808 090 **Tel:** (059) 917 8800

Email: info@employmentrights.ie **Web:** www.employmentrights.ie

The National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) has been established on an administrative basis. The Employment Law Compliance Bill 2008 aims to put it on a statutory basis.

The Authority is an Office of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and includes a number of units which were previously

part of the Department – the employment rights information unit, the labour inspectorate – which has been expanded – and the prosecution/enforcement unit.

You may complain to NERA if you consider that your rights are being or have been breached as regards Employment Regulation Orders or Registered Employment Agreements; the minimum wage; payslips; payment of wages; protection of young workers or employment permits.

Employment Appeals Tribunal

Davitt House, 65a Adelaide Road, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 220 222 **Tel:** (01) 631 3006 **Fax:** (01) 631 3266

Web: www.eatribunal.ie

The Employment Appeals Tribunal is a statutory tribunal which is responsible for implementing your rights under various protective employment laws. If you do not get your rights under, or there is a dispute about the interpretation of, legislation relating to redundancy, unfair dismissals, minimum notice, employers' insolvency etc. you should complain to the Tribunal. The decision of the Tribunal is generally called a determination and it is legally binding. In most cases, the determination may be appealed to the High Court by either party but only on a point of law. The Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment also has power to refer an issue to the High Court at the request of the Tribunal. Under the Unfair Dismissals Act and the Maternity Protection of Employees Act, either party may appeal to the Circuit Court within 6 weeks of the determination (the appeal is not confined to a point of law). If no appeal is brought to the Circuit Court and the employer does not implement the determination, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment may bring proceedings in the Circuit Court on behalf of the employee.



Equality Authority

See page 28

Equality Tribunal

See page 29

Health and Safety Authority

The Metropolitan Building, James Joyce St, Dublin 1

Lo-call: 1890 289 389 **Tel:** (01) 614 7000 **Fax:** (01) 614 7020

Email: wcu@hsa.ie **Web:** www.hsa.ie

The Health and Safety Authority is a statutory body which is responsible for the promotion and enforcement of workplace health and safety.

The Authority monitors compliance with occupational health and safety legislation and takes enforcement action (including prosecution) where necessary.

ICTU Appeals Board

31-32 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 889 7777 **Fax:** (01) 887 2012

Email: congress@ictu.ie **Web:** www.ictu.ie

If your trade union is affiliated to the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and you are unhappy with a decision or action taken by the union, you may appeal to the ICTU Appeals Board.

CHAPTER 6

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS AND BUSINESS REGULATION

This section describes the various bodies that may help you to enforce your general rights as a consumer; the bodies that regulate business in general and the regulatory bodies for specific businesses. It also includes a number of bodies that provide specific consumer services and a number of trade associations which may help you to deal with consumer problems. Many of the bodies described here have a range of functions but we concentrate here on their role in relation to consumers.

GENERAL CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

There are a number of statutory and voluntary bodies established to inform you of your rights as a consumer and to help you enforce these rights.

There are many areas in which there is no specific complaints mechanism. For example, if a plumber carries out an unsatisfactory job, you may complain to the firm or individual involved but there is no specific body to adjudicate your complaint. If you fail to get satisfaction by means of an informal complaint, you may have to go to Court. The Small Claims Court (see page 15) is particularly useful for consumer complaints. (See page 8 for guidelines on dealing with consumer complaints.)

National Consumer Agency

4 Harcourt Road, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 432 432 **Tel:** (01) 475 1444 **Fax:** (01) 402 5523

Email: ask@consumerconnect.ie

Web: www.nca.ie and www.consumerconnect.ie



The National Consumer Agency (NCA) is a statutory body. It is responsible for enforcing consumer protection legislation and promoting and protecting the interests and welfare of consumers. It has a wide range of powers to ensure that consumer legislation is enforced and it co-operates with other statutory agencies such as the Garda Síochána, the Competition Authority and the Financial Regulator in the enforcement process.

You may complain to the NCA about false or misleading claims about goods, services and prices and it may prosecute the traders concerned or apply for a court order to get misleading advertisements withdrawn or amended. If you suffer a loss or damage as a result of a false or misleading claim about goods or services you should seek redress from the trader and, if necessary, you may sue for damages in the normal way through the courts. You may also complain about unfair, misleading or aggressive trading practices. The NCA has a range of powers to prevent or stop such practices. Among other things, it may serve fixed payment notices and compliance notices on traders and, if the trader fails to comply, it may take criminal proceedings.

The NCA works with the consumer groups and bodies that are concerned with consumer protection and it also promotes the development of Alternative Dispute Resolution procedures as a means of resolving consumer disputes. The NCA has a responsibility to inform and advise consumers about their rights. There is a range of booklets and guides available from the agency and from the website: www.consumerconnect.ie

Budget 2009 provides that the National Consumer Agency is to be amalgamated with the Competition Authority. It is not clear if this change will include any changes to the remit of either organisation.

Consumers' Association of Ireland

43-44 Chelmsford Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 497 8600 **Fax:** (01) 497 8601

Email: cai@consumerassociation.ie **Web:** www.consumerassociation.ie

The Consumers' Association of Ireland is a voluntary body which aims to inform, represent and protect Irish consumers. It provides an advice and information service for consumers. The Consumers' Association also campaigns for improved consumer legislation.

European Consumer Centre

13a Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 809 0600 **Fax:** (01) 809 0601

Email: info@eccdublin.ie **Web:** www.eccdublin.ie

The European Consumer Centre is part of an EU-wide network of consumer centres. It is jointly financed by the National Consumer Agency and the European Commission. It provides a free information and advice service on consumer rights in the EU. It can help you to solve consumer disputes arising in other member states of the EU. It does this by trying to solve the dispute directly and, if this fails, by referring your case to the European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net).

European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)

European Consumer Centre, Clearing House,

13a Upper O'Connell St, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 809 0600 **Fax:** (01) 809 0601

Email: disputes@eccdublin.ie **Web:** www.eccdublin.ie

The European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-NET) consists of the European Consumer Centres in each member state of the EU,



together with those in Norway and Iceland. The network provides advice and support to anyone with a cross-border complaint or dispute to resolve and facilitates their access to alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

(The Network was created by merging two previously existing networks: the European Consumer Centres, which provided information and assistance on cross-border issues; and the European Extra-Judicial Network (EEJ-Net) which helped consumers to resolve their disputes through ADR schemes.)

European Consumer Consultative Group

Web: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/empowerment/eccg_en.htm

The European Consumer Consultative Group is an EU grouping set up by the European Commission as a mechanism for consulting with consumer interest groups. It is composed of representatives of consumer organisations in all the member states and the EU-level consumer organisations.

SOLVIT

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Block C, Earlsfort Centre, Hatch St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 631 2530 **Fax:** (01) 631 2562

Email: solvit@entemp.ie **Web:** www.entemp.ie/trade/marketaccess/singlemarket/solvit.htm and http://ec.europa.eu/solvit/site/index_en.htm

SOLVIT is an EU-wide informal problem-solving network which deals with cases of misapplication of EU law, including consumer law. It also covers Norway and Iceland. You may contact SOLVIT if you have a problem

implementing your rights in another EU member state, in Norway or in Iceland.

BEUC-European Consumers' Organisation

Web: www.beuc.org

ANEC-European Association for the Co-ordination of Consumer Representation in Standardisation

Web: www.anec.eu

Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Irish Branch

Merchant's House, 27-30 Merchant's Quay, Dublin 8

Tel: (01) 707 9739 **Fax:** (01) 707 9751

Email: ciarb@arbitration.ie **Web:** www.arbitration.ie

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Irish Branch is the professional body for arbitrators. It promotes Alternative Dispute Resolution with the emphasis on arbitration and mediation. Many contracts include provisions which require that disputes be dealt with by arbitration. For example, many insurance contracts include such provisions. Most package holiday contracts require that disputes be referred to arbitration. The Institute deals with these.

The arbitrator normally holds a hearing at which the consumer can appear in person with or without legal representation. There are set costs for the service and the arbitrator decides who pays the costs. The arbitrator's decision is legally binding if this is provided for in the contract.

Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland

IPC House, 35-39 Shelbourne Road, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 660 8766 **Fax:** (01) 660 8113

Email: standards@asai.ie **Web:** www.asai.ie



The Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland is a voluntary self-regulatory body of advertising practitioners which deals with complaints about standards of advertising. The Authority publishes a *Manual of Advertising Self-Regulation* which contains the *Code of Standards for Advertising, Promotional and Direct Marketing in Ireland*. You may complain to the Authority about breaches of this code, either by post or by completing the complaints form on the website.

National Standards Authority of Ireland

Block 1, Swift Square, Northwood, Santry, Dublin 9

Tel: (01) 807 3800 **Fax:** (01) 807 3838

Email: info@nsai.ie **Web:** www.nsai.ie

This National Standards Authority of Ireland Authority is the statutory standards body. It facilitates the development of voluntary standard documents that manufacturers or service providers may use as an aid to meeting safety or customer requirements. It deals with certification and quality marks – these indicate that the goods or services in question conform to certain standards.

Electro-Technical Council of Ireland Limited

Unit H12, Centrepont Business Park, Oak Road, Dublin 12

Tel: (01) 429 0088 **Fax:** (01) 429 0090

Email: info@etci.ie **Web:** www.etci.ie

The Electro-Technical Council of Ireland Limited is a voluntary body. It is responsible for standards in the field of electro-technology in collaboration with the National Standards Authority of Ireland.

GENERAL BUSINESS REGULATION

There are some statutory bodies whose function it is to regulate the general operations of business.

Companies Registration Office

Parnell House, 14 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Lo-call: 1890 220 226 **Tel:** (01) 804 5200 **Fax:** (01) 804 5222

Email: info@cro.ie **Web:** www.cro.ie

The Companies Registration Office is the statutory authority for the incorporation of new companies, the registration of business names and the enforcement of company law in relation to filing information. You can find out from the Office about the status of a company and about people who have been disqualified from serving as company directors.

Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement

16 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Lo-call: 1890 315 015 **Tel:** (01) 858 5800 **Fax:** (01) 858 5801

Email: info@odce.ie **Web:** www.odce.ie

The Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement is a statutory body whose role is to ensure that company law in Ireland is respected. It facilitates complaints and reporting of incidents which suggest that individuals or corporate bodies may be breaching the law.

Competition Authority

14 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Lo-call: 1890 220 224 **Tel:** (01) 804 5400 **Fax:** (01) 804 5401

Email: info@tca.ie or complaints@tca.ie **Web:** www.tca.ie



The Competition Authority is the statutory body which promotes competition in all sectors of the economy and investigates breaches of competition law. You may complain to the Authority if you consider that anyone is acting in an anti-competitive way, for example, by price-fixing, limiting output, or dividing the market with another supplier.

Budget 2009 provides that the Competition Authority is to be amalgamated with the National Consumer Agency. It is not clear if this change will include any changes to the remit of either organisation.

REGULATION OF SPECIFIC BUSINESSES

There are statutory regulators for a number of businesses and industries. These may also have internal complaints procedures. Most industries and businesses are not specifically regulated. There is a wide range of trade associations and representative organisations for the various sectors. We give details of some of them here. They are often included because they cover areas with which consumers need help or because they operate consumer complaints procedures. The primary purpose of trade associations is to represent the interests of their members and not all of them deal with consumer complaints. There is no obligation on any service provider to be a member of a trade association. If you have a problem with a business or industry that is not mentioned here, you should contact IBEC or Chambers Ireland to see if they can put you in touch with an appropriate association.

Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)

Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 605 1500 **Fax:** (01) 638 1500

Web: www.ibec.ie **Email:** info@ibec.ie

IBEC is the umbrella body for a wide range of industry and business sectoral groups and associations.

Chambers Ireland

17 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 400 4300 **Fax:** (01) 661 2811

Email: info@chambers.ie **Web:** www.chambers.ie

Chambers Ireland is a large business organisation which includes local Chambers of Commerce in most towns in Ireland.

Tour operators and travel agents

Commission for Aviation Regulation

3rd Floor, Alexandra House, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 661 1700 **Fax:** (01) 661 1269

Email: info@aviationreg.ie **Web:** www.aviationreg.ie

The Commission for Aviation Regulation is the statutory regulator of certain aspects of the aviation and travel trade sectors. It has functions in relation to airport charges and slot allocations at airports and enforces certain air passenger rights under EU legislation, including the rights of passengers with disabilities. It licenses Irish airlines, tour operators and travel agents and administers the bonding scheme for them – the grant of a licence is dependent on entering a bond. Its website includes a list of licensed tour operators and travel agents. If the business of your tour operator or travel agent fails, or if your flights are cancelled or delayed, you should contact the Commission. If you have problems with package holidays, you should contact the National Consumer Agency (see page 58).



Telecommunications (Telephone, cable TV and postal service)

Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg)

Abbey Court, Irish Life Centre, Lower Abbey St, Dublin 1

Consumer line: 1890 229 668 **Tel:** (01) 804 9600 **Fax:** (01) 804 9680

Web: www.comreg.ie (main site) or www.askcomreg.ie (consumer site)

Email: consumerline@comreg.ie

ComReg is the statutory regulatory authority for the communications sector – this sector includes telephone service providers (fixed-line and mobile) cable and MMDS (television) providers and the postal service. While it has a range of other functions, ComReg has a statutory function of protecting and promoting consumer interests. It has the power to investigate consumer complaints and it must also ensure that consumers have access to an inexpensive out-of-court dispute resolution procedure. If you have a complaint, you should first of all deal with your service provider. Each service provider has a code of conduct which includes details of complaints procedures. If you fail to get satisfaction, you may then complain to ComReg. You must make your complaint within nine months.

Complaint forms are available on the consumer website www.askcomreg.ie. ComReg has also published a range of consumer guides.

Regulator of Premium Rate Telecommunications Services (Regtel)

Crescent Hall, Mount St Crescent, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 7025 **Callsave:** 1850 741 741

Fax: (01) 676 7035 **Callsave:** 1850 741 747

Email: info@regtel.ie **Web:** www.regtel.ie

Regtel is the voluntary regulator of the content and promotion of premium rate telecommunications services. Premium rate telephone

services are those which cost more than standard telephone calls and have prefixes in the ranges 1512-1518 and 1520-1590. Premium rate SMS (text) services are those with a 5-digit Short Code starting with the number 5.

All member companies agree to be bound by a code of practice. You may complain to RegTel about these services. You may arrange with your telephone service provider to block access to premium rate services. It is intended that the Broadcasting Bill 2008 will include provisions to abolish RegTel in its present form and bring it within the overall remit of ComReg.

An Post

GPO, Freepost, Dublin 1

Callsave: 1850 575 859 **Tel:** (01) 705 7600 **Fax:** (01) 809 0900

Email: customer.services@anpost.ie **Web:** www.anpost.ie

An Post has an internal complaints procedure. You may complain about any aspect of the postal services by phone, Fax or email as above, by Freepost to "Customer Services" at the above address, or by completing an online enquiry form at www.anpost.ie/enquiry.

If you are not satisfied with the way your complaint is dealt with you may ask to have it reviewed by An Post's Customer Advocate. You may also complain to ComReg and the Ombudsman.

Customer Advocate

An Post, GPO, Freepost, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 705 8243

Email: customeradvocate@anpost.ie



Electricity and gas

Commission for Energy Regulation

The Exchange, Belgard Square North, Tallaght, Dublin 24

Lo-call: 1890 404 404 **Fax:** (01) 400 0850

Email: info@cer.ie **Web:** www.cer.ie and www.energycustomers.ie.

The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) is the statutory regulatory authority for the electricity and gas industries. It has a number of functions which include the protection of the final consumers of electricity and gas. If you have a problem with electricity or gas, you should contact the supplier initially. The complaints procedures for the main suppliers of electricity and gas to domestic consumers are described below. If you are not satisfied with how your supplier dealt with your complaint, you may contact the CER.

The CER is also responsible for introducing a regulatory system for electrical contractors and gas installers with respect to safety.

ESB complaints

Customers are entitled to change electricity supplier if they wish. In practice, virtually all of the domestic market is supplied by the Electricity Supply Board (ESB). The ESB has separate complaints mechanisms for electricity service and accounts/billing.

ESB Networks

Callsave: 1850 372 757

Email: esbnetworks@esb.ie

If you have problems with your electricity service, you should contact ESB Networks. The ESB Networks Customer Charter deals with network-

related work such as the provision of new connections, metering and network repairs.

If your complaint is not resolved, contact:

ESB Networks

Customer Relations Manager, Leopardstown Road, Foxrock, Dublin 18

Email: esbnetworks.complaints@esb.ie

If your complaint is still not resolved, contact the CER (see above).

If you have a problem with your electricity bill, you should contact the National Customer Contact Centre. The ESB's Customer Supply Charter deals with accounts and billing.

National Customer Contact Centre

Callsave: 1850 372 372

Email: service@esb.ie

If you are not satisfied with how the National Customer Contact Centre dealt with your complaint, contact:

ESB Customer Supply

Customer Complaints Facilitator, Bishop's Quay, Limerick

Email: complaintfacilitator@esb.ie

If your complaint is not resolved, you may contact the CER (see above).

Bord Gáis complaints

Bord Gáis has customer charters and a code of practice for complaints handling. If you have a complaint, contact:



Bord Gáis Energy Supply

Customer Care Manager, Bord Gáis Energy Supply, P.O. Box 10943, Dublin 1

Callsave: 1850 632 632

Email: info@bordgais.ie **Web:** www.bordgais.ie

If you are not satisfied, you should then contact the CER.

Electrical contractors and gas installers

The CER is also responsible for introducing a statutory regulatory system for electrical contractors and gas installers with respect to safety. The statutory system is in the process of being established. It will involve the CER issuing licences to self-regulatory bodies who comply with various requirements. In the interim, the CER has a non-statutory supervisory role in relation to electrical contractors. There are two self-regulatory bodies operating voluntarily under the supervision of the CER.

A regulatory system for gas installers is not expected to be in operation until 2009. Bord Gáis Networks maintains a Register of Gas Installers. These are gas installers and service agents who are considered to meet the required safety standards.

Electrical Contractors Safety and Standards Association

Coolmore House, Park Road, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Tel: (064) 37266 **Fax:** (064) 37269

Email: info@ecssa.ie **Web:** www.ecssa.ie

Register of Electrical Contractors of Ireland (RECI)

Unit 9, KCR Industrial Estate, Ravensdale Park, Kimmage, Dublin 12

Tel: (01) 492 9966 **Fax:** (01) 492 9983

Email: info@reci.ie **Web:** www.recி.ie

Security

Private Security Authority

Tipperary Technology Park, Rosanna Road, Tipperary Town

Tel: (062) 31588

Email: info@psa.gov.ie Web: www.psa.gov.ie

The Private Security Authority is the statutory body with responsibility for licensing and regulating the private security industry in Ireland. This means that it licenses and regulates door supervisors, private investigators, security guards and consultants and suppliers and installers of security equipment. Lists of licence-holders are on the website.

Tourism

Fáilte Ireland

Baggot St Bridge, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 525 525 Tel: (01) 602 4000 Fax: (01) 855 6821

Email: info@failteireland.ie Web: www.discoverireland.ie (consumer) and www.failteireland.ie (corporate)

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, is the statutory body for the development and promotion of tourism in Ireland. It is responsible for standards in hotels and other approved accommodation.

It has appointed sub-contractors for the inspection, registration and approval of various accommodation categories. Fáilte Ireland sets the policy and framework under which the sub-contractors operate. Fáilte Ireland has developed a scheme for the validation and provision



of information on registered and approved accommodation that provides for the needs of people with disabilities.

Fáilte Ireland has sub-contracted its accommodation registration, assessment and classification functions covering hotels, guesthouses and other categories of registered accommodation to Tourist Accommodation Management Services Ltd (TAMS). It has also appointed Tourism Accommodation Approvals Ltd (TAA) for the purpose of applying standards in the approval of bed and breakfast and certain other accommodations. It is no longer involved in approvals of self-catering accommodation.

Tourist Accommodation Management Services Ltd (TAMS)

56 Drury Street, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 617 9292 **Fax:** (01) 617 9553

Email: info@tams.ie

Tourism Accommodation Approvals Ltd (TAA)

P.O. Box 32, Coolcholly, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal

Tel: (071) 985 2760 **Fax:** (071) 985 2761

Email: taahomes@eircom.net

Irish Hotels Federation

13 Northbrook Road, Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 497 6459 **Fax:** (01) 497 4613

Email: info@ihf.ie **Web:** www.ihf.ie

The Irish Hotels Federation is the trade association that represents the hotel and guesthouse industry.

Food safety

There are a number of different agencies with responsibilities in the food safety area. These include several government departments, the Health Service Executive (HSE) and local authorities.

Food Safety Authority of Ireland

Abbey Court, Lower Abbey St, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 817 1300 **Fax:** (01) 817 1301 **Advice line:** 1890 336 677

Email: info@fsai.ie **Web:** www.fsai.ie

The Food Safety Authority is a statutory body. Its principal function is to take all reasonable steps to ensure that food produced, distributed or marketed in Ireland meets the highest standards of food safety and hygiene and complies with legal requirements or recognised codes of good practice. The Authority co-ordinates the activities of all the food safety agencies – it has agreements about the implementation of food safety legislation with a large number of agencies including county and city councils, the HSE, the National Consumer Agency (advertising of food), the Department of Agriculture and Food, the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, the Marine Institute, the Radiological Protection Institute and the Customs and Excise Service (imports). The advice line provides information and advice on a range of food safety issues.

Budget 2009 provides that the Food Safety Authority, the Office of Tobacco Control and the Irish Medicines Board are to be amalgamated into a new body to be called the Public Health and Medicines Safety Authority. It is not clear if there will be any changes to the remit of any of these bodies.



Health Service Executive – Environmental Health Officers

Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) are employed by the HSE. They have a range of duties including food hygiene and the country of origin designation of beef in restaurants. If you want to complain about food you have bought or a premises in which food is sold or stored (including shops and restaurants) or about incorrect or non-existent country of origin labelling, you should contact an Environmental Health Officer at your Local Health Office.

County and City Councils

The Food Safety Authority has contracts with a number of county and city councils to implement some food safety laws.

Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 200 510 **Tel:** (01) 607 2000 **Fax:** (01) 661 6263

Web: www.agriculture.gov.ie

The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is responsible for the following areas: hygiene (including all the major abattoirs and meat manufacturing and processing plants), milk and milk products, egg and egg products, pesticide control service, Border Inspection Posts, National Residue Monitoring Programme and Zoonoses (diseases which humans can get from animals). It is also responsible for animal identification and tracing, the National Beef Assurance Scheme and animal welfare generally. It maintains a register of organic food producers. Complaints about any of these areas should be made to the Department.

Consumer Liaison Panel

Consumer Liaison Panel Secretariat, c/o Corporate Affairs Division (6E),
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Agriculture House,
Kildare St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 607 2000 **Fax:** (01) 662 1165

Email: consumer@agriculture.gov.ie **Web:** www.agriculture.ie

The Consumer Liaison Panel was set up to strengthen communication between the consumer and the Department. The panel is representative of general consumers.

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority

Headquarters, West Cork Technology Park, Clonakilty, Co. Cork

Tel: (023) 59300 **Fax:** (023) 59720

Email: sfpa_info@sfpa.ie **Web:** www.sfpa.ie

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority is a statutory body which manages sea-fisheries protection and seafood safety. It took over this role from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in January 2007.

Marine Institute

Galway Technology Park, Rinville, Oranmore, Galway

Tel: (091) 387 200 **Fax:** (091) 387 201

Email: institute.mail@marine.ie **Web:** www.marine.ie

The Marine Institute is a statutory agency mainly involved in marine research and development. It is responsible for the monitoring of fish disease and of residues and contaminants in seafood.



Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland

3 Clonskeagh Square, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14

Tel: (01) 269 7766 **Fax:** (01) 269 7437

Email: rpil@rpil.ie **Web:** www.rpil.ie

The Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland is the statutory body which deals with dangers to health from radiation and radioactive contamination of the environment. It provides information to the public on these issues. It is responsible for licensing the use, manufacture, distribution and disposal of various sources of ionising radiation. The Institute and the Food Safety Authority of Ireland co-operate in regard to the monitoring of radioactivity levels in foods.

Medicines

Irish Medicines Board

Block A, Earlsfort Centre, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 4971 **Fax:** (01) 676 7836

Email: imb@imb.ie **Web:** www.imb.ie

The Irish Medicines Board is the statutory body which assesses the safety, quality and efficacy of marketed drugs for human and animal use. It is responsible for issuing licences for medical products for human and animal use; it licenses and inspects manufacturers of such products and regulates clinical trials of drugs.

Budget 2009 provides that the Irish Medicines Board, the Food Safety Authority and the Office of Tobacco Control are to be amalgamated into a new body to be called the Public Health and Medicines Safety Authority. It is not clear if there will be any changes to the remit of any of these bodies.

Restaurants

Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI)

11 Bridge Court, City Gate, St Augustine St, Dublin 8

Tel: (01) 677 9901 Fax: (01) 671 8414

Email: info@rai.ie Web: www.rai.ie

The RAI is the representative body for restaurants.

Undertakers

Irish Association of Funeral Directors

Mespil House, Mespil Business Centre, Sussex Road, Dublin 4

Freephone: 1800 927 111

Web: www.iafd.ie

The Irish Association of Funeral Directors is the trade association for undertakers. It has a Code of Practice that includes a complaints procedure.

Driving and transport

Road Safety Authority

Moy Business Park, Primrose Hill, Ballina, Co. Mayo

Lo-call: 1890 506 080 Tel: (096) 25000 Fax: (096) 25252

Email: info@rsa.ie Web: www.rsa.ie

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) is a statutory body which is responsible for the promotion of road safety, driver testing and licensing, vehicle standards, enforcement of road haulage rules, registration of driving instructors, driver vocational training and compulsory basic training for motorcyclists.



The RSA maintains a register of Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs). By 1st January 2009, every driving instructor will have to be registered as an ADI. Anyone who is not on the register will not be able to provide driving lessons for payment.

Railway Safety Commission

Trident House, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Tel: (01) 206 8110 **Fax:** (01) 206 8115

Email: info@rsc.ie **Web:** www.rsc.ie

The Railway Safety Commission is the statutory body which regulates railway safety. It has responsibility for matters of railway and cableway safety on passenger carrying systems and freight carrying systems where they interface with public roads. It deals with safety-related comments or queries, but complaints about delayed trains or overcrowding should be directed to Iarnród Éireann, the railway operator.

Contact details for Iarnród Éireann's customer relations service are as follows:

For complaints regarding Sligo, Waterford and Wexford Intercity routes and all commuter routes serving Connolly Station:

Customer Relations, Northern/Eastern, Connolly Station, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 703 2601

For complaints regarding Cork, Limerick, Kerry, Galway & Mayo Intercity routes and all commuter routes serving Heuston Station:

Customer Relations, Southern/Western, Heuston Station, Dublin 8

Tel: (01) 703 4499

For complaints regarding DART services:

Customer Relations, DART, Pearse Station, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 703 3592

Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI)

5 Upper Pembroke St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 1690 **Fax:** (01) 661 9213

Email: info@simi.ie; standards@simi.ie (for complaints) **Web:** www.simi.ie

The Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) is the representative body for the motor industry. You may complain to the Society about services provided by its members. You should complain directly to the service provider and, if not satisfied, then complain to the SIMI Investigation and Complaints service. This service deals with complaints about second-hand vehicles and about the service and repair of new and used vehicles which have been bought from a SIMI member.

If the issue cannot be resolved, the dispute is referred to SIMI's Retail Motor Industry Standards Tribunal for decision. The Standards Tribunal has an independent Chairman and SIMI members agree to be bound by the Tribunal decision. The complaint should be made in writing within three months.

Driving Instructor Register of Ireland

Road Safety House, 50 Nore Road, Dublin Industrial Estate,
Glasnevin, Dublin 11

Tel: (01) 830 8481 **Fax:** (01) 830 8475

Email: info@dir.ie **Web:** www.dir.ie

The Driving Instructor Register of Ireland is a voluntary driving instructor monitoring body. The monitoring of driving instructors is being taken over



by the Road Safety Authority and should be fully under its remit by the start of 2009.

Taxis

Commission for Taxi Regulation

35 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 606 090 **Tel:** (01) 659 3800 **Fax:** (01) 659 3801

Web: www.taxiregulator.ie

The Commission for Taxi Regulation (the Taxi Regulator) is the statutory regulatory body for taxis. It has responsibility for licensing, ownership, control and operation of taxis, hackneys, limousines and their drivers. This includes setting maximum fares.

If you wish to complain to the Commission, you can phone the consumer information line at the Lo-call number given above, and ask for a complaint form, or else download the form from the website.

Budget 2009 provides that the Commission for Taxi Regulation will be incorporated into a new Dublin Transport Authority. It is not clear if there will be any change in its remit.

Housing, builders, auctioneers and surveyors

National Property Services Regulatory Authority

2nd Floor, Abbey Buildings, Abbey Road, Navan, Co. Meath

Lo-call: 1890 252 712 **Tel:** (046) 903 3800 **Fax:** (046) 903 3888

Email: npsra_inbox@npsra.ie **Web:** www.npsra.ie (interim site)

It is proposed to establish a statutory National Property Services Regulatory Authority (NPSRA). This will be the regulatory authority for auctioneers and estate agents. Management agents – that is, companies who manage properties on behalf of landlords – will be covered by this authority. Property management companies – that is, companies formed by the owners of multi-unit developments (blocks of apartments) – will not be covered by this authority.

Irish Auctioneers and Valuers Institute

38 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 661 1794 **Fax:** (01) 661 1797

Email: info@iavi.ie **Web:** www.iavi.ie

Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers

129 Lower Baggot St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 678 5685 **Fax:** (01) 676 2890

Email: info@ipav.ie **Web:** www.ipav.ie

These are the representative bodies for auctioneers. They are self-governing at present and operate codes of practice. They each have a complaints procedure for members of the public and a compensation fund for cases of misappropriation of clients' funds.

Construction Industry Federation

Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 406 6000 **Fax:** (01) 496 6953

Email: cif@cif.ie **Web:** www.cif.ie

The Construction Industry Federation (CIF) is the trade organisation of people involved in the construction industry. You may complain about a builder who is a member.



HomeBond, The National House Building Guarantee Scheme

Construction House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Callsave: 1850 306 300 **Fax:** (01) 496 6548

Email: info@homebond.ie **Web:** www.homebond.ie

HomeBond is a scheme established by the Construction Industry Federation and the Irish Home Builders Association, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment. It ensures that proper building standards are maintained and protects purchasers by underwriting any major structural defects.

HomeBond has a complaints scheme for non-structural defects in new houses, arising within a year of buying the house.

Non-structural defects covered under the scheme include leaky plumbing, uneven flooring, breaches of fire requirements such as smoke alarms and lack of insulation.

Buyers should check that their particular builder or developer is registered. If a problem arises, the buyer must notify the builder in writing. If the builder fails to rectify the problem, HomeBond will mediate and possibly refer the issue to arbitration.

The Society of Chartered Surveyors

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 5500 **Fax:** (01) 676 1412

Email: info@scs.ie **Web:** www.scs.ie

The Society of Chartered Surveyors is the professional body for chartered surveyors. See page 100 for more detail.

The Internet

Office for Internet Safety

Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
94 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 221 227

Web: www.justice.ie

The Office for Internet Safety is an executive office of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It has responsibility for internet safety, particularly in relation to combating child pornography; the internet hotline (www.hotline.ie) and monitoring compliance with the Internet Service Provider industry code of practice.

The hotline is a system for dealing with reports of illegal content on the internet. It is partly funded by the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (see below). It accepts and investigates reports from the public in relation to child pornography and other illegal material on the internet. This hotline is a member of the international INHOPE Association (www.inhope.org), a network of European hotlines which is expanding to all parts of the world. The INHOPE Association develops procedures and shares information on the best practices for the tracing and tracking of illegal child pornography.

Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland Ltd

Unit 24, Sandyford Office Park, Dublin 18

Tel: (01) 294 5280 **Fax:** (01) 294 5282

Email: info@ispai.ie **Web:** www.ispai.ie



The Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland is the trade organisation for internet service providers. It operates a code of practice and part-funds the internet hotline – see above.

Regulation of charities

The Charities Bill 2007 provides for the establishment of a Charities Regulatory Authority and a Charity Appeals Tribunal. At present, there is no regulatory body for charities.

CHAPTER 7

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland

P.O. Box 559, Dame St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 434 4000 **Fax:** (01) 671 6561

Email: enquiries@centralbank.ie **Web:** www.centralbank.ie

The Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland is the full name of what is generally known as the Central Bank. The Central Bank is a statutory body whose main activities are concerned with the maintenance of price stability in the euro area, monetary policy and foreign exchange. The Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority (the Financial Regulator) is a statutory body within the overall Central Bank structure.

Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority (Financial Regulator)

P.O. Box 9138, College Green, Dublin 2

Consumer helpline: 1890 777 777 **Tel:** (01) 410 4000 **Fax:** (01) 410 4900

Email: consumerinfo@financialregulator.ie **Web:** www.itsyourmoney.ie

The Financial Regulator is a constituent part of the Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland. The Financial Regulator is the statutory regulator of the financial services sector. This means that it is the regulatory authority for banks, building societies, insurance companies, insurance intermediaries (brokers), mortgage intermediaries, investment management firms, stockbrokers, credit unions and moneylenders. All of these institutions must have a licence from the Authority.



The Financial Regulator does not regulate occupational pensions and Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs) – see the Pensions Board (page 89); travel agents (selling travel insurance) – see the Commission for Aviation Regulation (page 66); aspects of private health insurance providers – see the Health Insurance Authority (page 90).

The Regulator has to carry out its functions in a way which is consistent with the rules of the European System of Central Banks (the European Central Bank and the central banks of the member states of the EU) and with the performance of the functions of the Governor and Board of the Central Bank. The Governor or the Board may issue guidelines to the Regulator as to the policies and principles to be implemented in certain areas and the Regulator is obliged to follow these.

Consumer protection

The Financial Regulator has specific functions in relation to consumer protection. It is obliged to promote the best interests of the users of financial services in a way which is consistent with the orderly and proper functioning of financial markets and the orderly and prudent supervision of the providers of financial services. It is also obliged to take action to increase awareness among consumers of the financial services that are available and of the costs, benefits and risks associated with these services. The Regulator has introduced a number of Consumer Codes of Conduct for the different financial services it regulates. These codes are available on the website. The Regulator investigates complaints about breaches of these codes. There are Consumer and Industry Consultative Panels to advise the Regulator.

You may complain to the Regulator about, among other things, bank charges, harassment of customers and failure to abide by rules in relation to cooling-off periods. The Regulator does not award compensation but it

does have the power to impose sanctions on a financial services provider if it is in breach of the rules.

The Irish Financial Services Appeals Tribunal is a statutory tribunal to hear appeals against sanctions on financial services providers and against some other regulatory decisions. It does not have a role in dealing with consumers. **Web:** www.ifsat.ie

IFSRA Consumer Director

The Consumer Director of the Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority (IFSRA or the Financial Regulator) is a statutory position within the Authority. The Consumer Director has specific responsibility for:

- The protection of consumers and/or investors under a range of legislation including the Consumer Credit Act 1995, the Investment Intermediaries Act, 1995, the Stock Exchange Act 1995 the Central Bank Act 1989 and the Insurance Act 1989
- Monitoring the provision of financial services to consumers

Registrar of Credit Unions

The Registrar of Credit Unions is a statutory office within the general remit of the Financial Regulator. The Registrar is required to inform and assist the Consumer Director in relation to any complaint about a credit union.

Financial Services Ombudsman

3rd Floor, Lincoln House, Lincoln Place, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 882 090 **Tel:** (01) 662 0899 **Fax:** (01) 662 0890

Web: www.financialombudsman.ie

The Financial Services Ombudsman is a statutory office which deals with complaints from consumers about their individual dealings with



all financial service providers. You must first complain to the financial institution concerned and then bring your complaint to the Ombudsman if you fail to get satisfaction. The Ombudsman tries to get a mediated solution. The Ombudsman has the power to order financial institutions to do certain things and to pay compensation.

FIN-NET: EU Out-of-Court Complaints Network for Financial Services

Web: http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/fin-net/about_en.htm

FIN-NET is an EU-wide out-of-court complaints network for financial services. It also covers Norway and Iceland. It has been designed particularly to facilitate the out-of-court resolution of consumer disputes when the service provider is established in an EU Member State other than that where the consumer lives. The network brings together more than 35 different national schemes that either cover financial services in particular (for example, banking and insurance ombudsman schemes) or handle consumer disputes in general (for example, consumer complaint boards). The Financial Services Ombudsman in Ireland is a member of the network.

Pensions Board

Verschoyle House, 28-30 Lower Mount St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 656 565 **Tel:** (01) 613 1900 **Fax:** (01) 631 8602

Email: info@pensionboard.ie **Web:** www.pensionsboard.ie

The Pensions Board is the statutory body which regulates occupational pension schemes and Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs). It does not regulate personal pensions – these are insurance contracts and so come under the general regulatory remit of the Financial Regulator (see page 86). You may complain to the Pensions Board about any

failure to comply with the law on the operation of occupational pension schemes and PRSAs. For example, you may contact the Board if you are concerned that your pension scheme may not have enough funding or if your employer has failed to give you access to a PRSA.

Office of the Pensions Ombudsman

36 Upper Mount Street, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 647 1650 **Fax:** (01) 676 9577

Email: info@pensionsombudsman.ie **Web:** www.pensionsombudsman.ie

The Office of the Pensions Ombudsman is a statutory office which investigates and decides complaints and disputes involving occupational pension schemes and Personal Retirement Savings Accounts (PRSAs). Most pension schemes are required to have an internal dispute resolution mechanism and you should use this before going to the Ombudsman. There is a standard form for making a complaint.

The Pensions Ombudsman does not investigate complaints relating to the social welfare pension schemes (see Social Welfare Appeals Office, page 32) or to personal pension schemes. Personal pensions are insurance contracts and so come under the general ambit of the Financial Services Ombudsman.

Both the Pensions Board and the Pensions Ombudsman may investigate some complaints in relation to occupational pensions and PRSAs. The ruling of the Pensions Ombudsman is binding on both parties (subject to the right of appeal to the High Court).

Health Insurance Authority

Canal House, Canal Road, Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 406 0080 **Fax:** (01) 406 0081

Email: info@hia.ie **Web:** www.hia.ie



The Health Insurance Authority is the statutory regulatory authority for private health insurance. It maintains a register of approved health insurance providers and ensures that they meet the rules on the provision of health insurance.

Office of the Registrar of Friendly Societies

Parnell House, 14 Parnell Square, Dublin 1

Lo-call: 1890 220 225 **Tel:** (01) 804 5499 **Fax:** (01) 804 5498

The Registrar is the statutory authority for the registration, regulation and supervision of bodies such as co-operatives, trade unions and friendly societies. The regulatory powers vary in accordance with the institution.

Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority

Willow House, Millennium Park, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: (045) 983 600 **Fax:** (045) 983 601

Email: info@iaasa.ie **Web:** www.iaasa.ie

The Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority is a statutory authority which, among other things, supervises how the prescribed accountancy bodies regulate and monitor their members. (The relevant bodies are listed in the *Regulation of Professionals* section at page 101.)

Trade associations in the financial services area

The organisations listed here are trade associations and representative bodies which represent the interests of the members of that trade. In general, they do not have a specific role in dealing with consumer complaints. However, they do have an interest in promoting and retaining the reputation of their members and, because of this, they may act on complaints received.

Irish Banking Federation

Nassau House, Nassau St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 671 5311 **Fax:** (01) 679 6680

Email: ibf@ibf.ie **Web:** www.ibf.ie

The Irish Banking Federation is the representative organisation for the banks. The Federation has developed a number of codes of conduct for dealing with customers.

Irish League of Credit Unions

33-41 Lower Mount St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 614 6700 **Fax:** (01) 614 6701

Email: info@creditunion.ie **Web:** www.creditunion.ie

The Irish League of Credit Unions is the representative organisation for credit unions. Among its aims is the promotion of high standards within credit unions.

Irish Insurance Federation

Insurance House, 39 Molesworth St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 1820 **Fax:** (0 1) 676 1943

Email: fed@iif.ie **Web:** www.iif.ie

The Irish Insurance Federation is the representative association for the insurance industry. It operates the Insurance Information Service.



CHAPTER 8

REGULATION OF PROFESSIONALS

There is statutory regulation of a number of professions. Some of these regulatory bodies are composed exclusively of members of the profession but many also have non-professionals involved. The statutory regulatory bodies generally have mechanisms for investigating complaints where their members do not adhere to the required professional standards.

Those professions which are not regulated usually have a professional body to represent them. Most of these bodies include the maintenance of professional standards among their aims and some of them have complaints mechanisms.

MEDICAL BODIES

The following are statutory regulatory bodies for their professions. In general, they promote high standards of professional conduct, maintain a register of qualified personnel and investigate allegations of professional misconduct or fitness to practise. They usually have a Fitness to Practise Committee (or similar committee) which deals with complaints into the conduct of a registered practitioner on the grounds of professional misconduct and/or fitness to engage in the practice by reason of physical or mental disability.

Doctors

Medical Council

Lynn House, Portobello Court, Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 498 3100 **Fax:** (01) 498 3102

Email: info@mcirl.ie **Web:** www.medicalcouncil.ie

The Medical Council is the statutory regulatory body which arranges for the registration of doctors and aims to protect the interests of the public when dealing with registered medical practitioners.

Dentists

Dental Council

57 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 2069 **Fax:** (01) 676 2076

Email: info@dentalcouncil.ie **Web:** www.dentalcouncil.ie

The Dental Council is the statutory regulatory body which provides for the registration of dentists. The Council can inquire into a registered dentist's fitness to practise dentistry.

Nurses

An Bord Altranais (The Nursing Board)

18-20 Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Tel: (01) 639 8500 **Fax:** (01) 639 8595

Email: admin@nursingboard.ie **Web:** www.nursingboard.ie

An Bord Altranais is the statutory regulatory body which provides for the registration, control and education of nurses and for other matters relating to nurses and the practice of nursing.

Opticians and ophthalmic opticians

Bord na Radharcmhastóirí (Opticians Board)

18 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 7416 **Fax:** (01) 662 1051

Email: info@opticiansboard.ie **Web:** www.opticiansboard.ie



The Opticians Board is the statutory regulatory body for optometrists and dispensing opticians. It maintains a register of practitioners.

Budget 2009 provides that the Opticians Board is to be subsumed into the Health and Social Care Professionals Council.

Pharmacists

Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland

The Inspectorate, 18 Shrewsbury Road, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 218 4000 **Fax:** (01) 283 7678

Email: info@pharmaceuticalsociety.ie

Web: www.pharmaceuticalsociety.ie

The Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland is the statutory regulatory body for pharmacists. It maintains a register of pharmacists and pharmacies.

Vets

Veterinary Council

53 Lansdowne Road, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 668 4402 **Fax:** (01) 660 4373

Email: info@vci.ie **Web:** www.vci.ie

The Veterinary Council is the statutory regulatory body for vets and veterinary nurses. It maintains a register of practitioners.

OTHER HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONALS

The Health and Social Care Professionals Council is a statutory body which aims to set up regulatory bodies for a number of health and social care professions. The Council was established in 2007 and it is intended that it will set up statutory registration boards for the following professions which are not subject to statutory regulation at present:

- Clinical biochemists
- Dietitians
- Medical scientists
- Occupational therapists
- Orthoptists
- Physiotherapists
- Podiatrists
- Psychologists
- Radiographers
- Social care workers
- Social workers
- Speech and language therapists

Other professions may be included in the future.

Health and Social Care Professionals Council

c/o National Social Work Qualifications Board

8-11 Lower Baggot St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 644 9703

At present, there is no general regulatory system for a number of health professionals or for alternative medical practitioners. Most have organisations which aim to set standards and provide a register of members.



The following are the professional bodies for some of the currently unregulated professions:

Dietitians and clinical nutritionists

Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute

Ashgrove House, Kill Avenue, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

Tel: (01) 280 4839 **Fax:** (01) 280 5082

Email: info@indi.ie **Web:** www.indi.ie

Physiotherapists

Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists

Royal College of Surgeons, 123 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 402 2148 **Fax:** (01) 402 2160

Email: info@iscp.ie **Web:** www.iscp.ie

Occupational therapists

Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland

Ground Floor Office, Bow Bridge House, Bow Lane, Kilmainham, Dublin 8

Tel: (01) 633 7222

Email: aoti@eircom.net **Web:** www.aoti.ie

Speech and language therapists

Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists

P.O. Box 541, Ballinlough, Cork

Tel: (085) 706 8707 **Fax:** (085) 706 8707

Email: info@iaslt.com **Web:** www.iaslt.com

Psychologists

Psychological Society of Ireland

CX House, 2A Corn Exchange Place, Poolbeg St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 474 9160 Fax: (01) 474 9161

Email: info@psihq.ie Web: www.psihq.ie

Social workers

Irish Association of Social Workers

114-116 Pearse St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 677 4838

Email: iasw@eircom.net Web: www.iasw.ie

Counsellors and therapists

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy

21 Dublin Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Tel: (01) 272 3427 Fax: (01) 286 9933

Email: iacp@irish-counselling.ie Web: www.irish-counselling.ie

Lawyers

Law Society of Ireland

Blackhall Place, Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 672 4800 Fax: (01) 672 4801

Email: general@lawsociety.ie Web: www.lawsociety.ie

The Law Society is the statutory regulatory body for solicitors. It makes regulations on among other things, standards and conduct. It administers a compensation fund for losses suffered by clients through defaulting solicitors. It has appointed an Independent Adjudicator (see below).



Independent Adjudicator of the Law Society

26-27 Upper Pembroke St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 662 0457

The Adjudicator's role is to ensure that complaints about the conduct of a solicitor are dealt with fairly and impartially by the Law Society. The Adjudicator cannot investigate at first hand a complaint about a solicitor. When the Legal Services Ombudsman (see below) is in place, the Independent Adjudicator will no longer operate.

Bar Council

Law Library, Four Courts, Dublin 7

Tel: (01) 817 5000 **Fax:** (01) 817 5150

Email: barcouncil@lawlibrary.ie **Web:** www.lawlibrary.ie

The Bar Council is a non-statutory body which controls and regulates the professional conduct of members of the Bar.

Legal Services Ombudsman

The Legal Services Ombudsman Bill 2008 proposes to establish a Legal Services Ombudsman. The Ombudsman's main functions will be to receive and investigate complaints in relation to the handling of complaints by the Law Society or the Bar Council and to review the complaints procedures of these bodies. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator will be abolished when the Ombudsman is appointed.

Teachers

Teaching Council

Block A, Maynooth Business Campus, Maynooth, Co. Kildare

Lo-call: 1890 224 224 **Tel:** (01) 6517 900 **Fax:** (01) 651 7901

Email: info@teachingcouncil.ie **Web:** www.teachingcouncil.ie

The Teaching Council is the statutory regulatory body for teachers. It maintains a register of qualified teachers.

Architects and surveyors

Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

8 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 1703 **Fax:** (01) 661 0948

Email: info@riai.ie **Web:** www.riai.ie

The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland is the statutory regulatory body for professionally qualified architects in Ireland. It is required to maintain a register of architects and it has a professional conduct committee.

Society of Chartered Surveyors

5 Wilton Place, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 5500 **Fax:** (01) 676 1412

Email: info@scs.ie **Web:** www.scs.ie

The Society of Chartered Surveyors is the representative body for surveyors. It will be the statutory regulatory body for building surveyors and quantity surveyors when the relevant parts of the Building Control Act 2007 come into effect. It will be required to maintain a register of surveyors and it will have a professional conduct committee.

Accountants

The Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (see page 91) is a statutory authority which, among other things, supervises how the prescribed accountancy bodies regulate and monitor their members.



The following are the main Irish-based prescribed accountancy bodies. A number of the prescribed bodies are based abroad.

Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland

Burlington House, Burlington Road, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 637 7200 **Fax:** (01) 668 0842

Email: ca@icai.ie **Web:** www.icai.ie

Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland

17 Harcourt St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 425 1000 **Fax:** (01) 425 1001

Email: cpa@cpaireland.ie **Web:** www.cpaireland.ie

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants

9 Leeson Park, Dublin 6

Tel: (01) 498 8900 **Fax:** (01) 496 3615

Email: info@ie.accaglobal.com **Web:** www.accaglobal.com

Institute of Incorporated Public Accountants

2 Abbey Moat House, Abbey St, Naas, Co. Kildare

Tel: (045) 895 936 **Fax:** (045) 895 830

Web: www.iipa.ie

Engineers

Engineers Ireland (also known as the Institution of Engineers of Ireland)

22 Clyde Road, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 668 4341 **Fax:** (01) 668 5508

Email: info@engineersireland.ie **Web:** www.iei.ie

Engineers Ireland is the professional organisation for engineering in Ireland.

CHAPTER 9

MEDIA AND ARTS

Broadcasting

Broadcasting Complaints Commission

2-5 Warrington Place, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 676 1097 **Fax:** (01) 676 0948

Email: info@bcc.ie **Web:** www.bcc.ie

The Broadcasting Complaints Commission deals with broadcasting complaints concerning radio and television broadcasters licensed in Ireland. If you are unhappy with broadcasting content, including advertisements, you may complain to the Commission. Complaint forms are available and you should complain within 30 days of the broadcast. The Broadcasting Bill 2008 provides that the proposed new Broadcasting Authority of Ireland will, among other things, take over the role of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission.

Radio Telefis Éireann (RTÉ)

Donnybrook, Dublin 4

Tel: (01) 208 3111 **Fax:** (01) 208 3080

Web: www.rte.ie

RTÉ is a public service broadcaster. It operates a complaints procedure. All programmes broadcast are subject to RTÉ's Programme Standards and Guidelines and you may complain about any breach of these. You should initially complain directly to the programme in question.

If you are unhappy with the response to your complaint, you may look for a review – write to:



Complaints' Review, c/o Freedom of Information Office

RTÉ, Donnybrook, Dublin 4

Email: complaints.review@rte.ie

You may also complain to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission about some aspects of RTÉ broadcasting.

Broadcasting Commission of Ireland

2-5 Warrington Place, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 644 1200 **Fax:** (01) 676 0948

Email: info@bci.ie **Web:** www.bci.ie

The Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) is responsible for, among other things, licensing and monitoring independent broadcasting services and the development of codes and rules in relation to programming and advertising standards. The BCI will be subsumed into the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland when the Broadcasting Bill 2008 becomes law.

Newspapers

The Office of the Press Ombudsman is a non-statutory office which deals with complaints from members of the public about articles in newspapers that are in breach of the *Code of Practice for Newspapers and Periodicals*. You must first complain to the editor of the newspaper. If you are not satisfied with the response you may complain to the Ombudsman. You may appeal the Ombudsman's decision to the Press Council.

The Defamation Bill 2006 proposes to put the Press Council on a statutory basis.

Office of the Press Ombudsman

1, 2 & 3 Westmoreland St, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 208 080 **Fax:** (01) 674 0046

Email: info@pressombudsman.ie **Web:** www.pressombudsman.ie

Press Council of Ireland

1, 2 & 3 Westmoreland St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 648 9130 **Fax:** (01) 674 0046

Email: info@presscouncil.ie **Web:** www.presscouncil.ie

Classification and censorship

Irish Film Classification Office

16 Harcourt Terrace, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 799 6100 **Fax:** (01) 676 1898

Email: info@ifco.gov.ie **Web:** www.ifco.ie

The Irish Film Classification Office (formerly the Film Censor's Office) is a statutory office which is responsible for examining and certifying films, videos and DVDs. An appeal may be made against a decision of the Director of Film Classification to the Classification of Films Appeal Board. The Appeals Board is at the same address.

Censorship of Publications Board

13 Lower Hatch St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 661 0553

Web: www.justice.ie



The Censorship of Publications Board is a statutory body which decides on complaints that a publication is indecent or obscene. A decision of the Board may be appealed to the Censorship of Publications Appeals Board (same address).

Budget 2009 provides that the Censorship of Publications Board and its Appeals Board are to be amalgamated with the Office for Film Classification.

Arts and heritage

Arts Council

70 Merrion Square, Dublin 2

Lo-call: 1890 392 492 **Tel:** (01) 618 0200 **Fax:** (01) 676 1302

Email: info@artscouncil.ie **Web:** www.artscouncil.ie

The Arts Council is the statutory body which is responsible for promoting and developing the arts.

Heritage Council

Áras na hOidhreachta, Church Lane, Kilkenny

Tel: (056) 777 0777 **Fax:** (056) 777 0788

Email: mail@heritagecouncil.com **Web:** www.heritagecouncil.ie

The Heritage Council is a statutory body with responsibility for proposing policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage.

CHAPTER 10

INTERNATIONAL

European Commission Representation in Ireland

European Union House, 18 Dawson St, Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 634 1111 **Fax:** (01) 634 1112

Email: eu-ie-info-request@ec.europa.eu **Web:** <http://ec.europa.eu/ireland>

If you consider that your rights under EU law are not being respected you may make a formal complaint to the European Commission. The Commission will investigate your complaint and, if your complaint is upheld, may ask the Government to ensure that your rights are respected or may take the Government to the European Court of Justice.

The Commission has adopted a Code of Good Administrative Behaviour in its relations with the public. The Code is legally binding on the Commission as an institution and on individual staff of the Commission.

Further information on the complaints procedure is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/civil_society/code/index_en.htm

European Ombudsman

1 avenue du Président Robert Schuman, B.P. 403, F-67001
Strasbourg-Cedex, France

Tel: (00 333) 8817 2313 **Fax:** (00 333) 8817 9062

Email: euro-ombudsman@europarl.eu.int

Web: www.euro-ombudsman.eu.int



The EU Ombudsman examines complaints about maladministration by EU institutions.

President of the European Parliament

L-2929 Luxembourg

Tel: (00 352) 43001 **Fax:** (00 352) 437009

Web: www.europarl.europa.eu

The European Parliament has a Petitions Committee which hears complaints from citizens about matters related to the EU. It does not have the power to implement its decisions but it is influential. Write to your MEP or directly to the Parliament.

www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/peti_home_en.htm

CITIZENS INFORMATION SERVICES

DUBLIN

Ballyfermot CIS

Ballyfermot Community Civic Centre, Ballyfermot Road, Dublin 10.

Tel: (01) 620 7181

Blanchardstown CIS

Westend House, Westend Office Park, Snugborough Road Extension,
Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

Tel: (01) 822 0449

City Centre (Dublin) CIS

13A Upper O'Connell Street, Dublin 1.

Tel: (01) 809 0633

Clondalkin CIS

Luke Cullen House, Unit 2, Oakfield Industrial Estate, 9th Lock Road,
Clondalkin, Dublin 22.

Tel: (01) 457 9045

Crumlin CIS

146 Sundrive Road, Crumlin, Dublin 12.

Tel: (01) 454 6070

Rathmines Community Partnership,

11 Wynnefield Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Tel: (01) 498 2999

**Dublin 8 and Bluebell CIS**

90 Meath Street, Dublin 8.

Tel: (01) 473 4671

Dublin City North Bay CIS

2 Sybil Hill Road, Raheny, Dublin 5.

Tel: (01) 805 8574

Dublin North West CIS

Unit 7, Finglas Village, Dublin 11.

Tel: (01) 864 1970

Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown CIS

85-86 Patrick Street, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

Tel: (01) 284 4544

Fingal (North County) CIS

Unit 26, Swords Plaza, Fingal, Co. Dublin.

Tel: (01) 840 6877

Northside CIS

Northside Civic Centre, Bunratty Road, Coolock, Dublin 17.

Tel: (01) 867 4301

Tallaght CIS

512 Main Street, Tallaght, Dublin 24.

Tel: (01) 451 5887

CARLOW

Co. Carlow CIS

St Catherine's Community Centre, St Joseph's Road, Carlow Town.

Tel: (059) 913 875

CAVAN

Co. Cavan CIS

Townhall Place, Townhall Street, Cavan.

Tel: (049) 433 2641

CLARE

Co. Clare CIS

Bindon Lane, Bank Place, Ennis.

Tel: (065) 684 1221

CORK CITY AND COUNTY

Cork City Centre and South County CIS

80 South Mall, Cork.

Tel: (021) 427 7377

Cork City (North) CIS

Harbour View Road, Portacabin beside Community College,
Knocknaheeny.

Tel: (021) 430 2301

Cork North and East County CIS

61 Lower Patrick Street, Fermoy.

Tel: (025) 32 711

**West Cork County CIS**

Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry.

Tel: (027) 52 100

DONEGAL

Co. Donegal CIS

DCIS Company Office, 10 Celtic Apartments, Pearse Road, Letterkenny.

Tel: (074) 912 6956

GALWAY CITY AND COUNTY

Galway CIS

Augustine House, St Augustine Street, Galway City.

Tel: (091) 563 344

KERRY

Co. Kerry CIS

4 Bridge Lane, Tralee.

Tel: (066) 712 3655

KILDARE

North Kildare CIS

Derroon House, Dublin Road, Maynooth.

Tel: (01) 628 5477

South Kildare CIS

Room 5, Parish Centre Station Road, Newbridge.

Tel: (045) 431 735

KILKENNY

Kilkenny CIS

4 The Parade, Kilkenny.

Tel: (056) 776 2755

LAOIS

Co. Laois CIS

27 Main Street, Portlaoise.

Tel: (057) 862 1425

LEITRIM

Co. Leitrim CIS

Bridge Street, Drumshanbo.

Tel: (071) 964 0995

LIMERICK CITY AND COUNTY

Limerick CIS

54 Catherine Street, Limerick City.

Tel: (061) 311 444

LONGFORD

Co. Longford CIS

Level One, Longford Shopping Centre, Longford Town.

Tel: (043) 41 069



LOUTH

Co. Louth CIS

4 Adelphi Court, Long Walk, Dundalk.

Tel: (042) 932 9149

MAYO

Co. Mayo CIS

Cavendish House, Hopkins Road, Castlebar.

Tel: (094) 902 5544

MEATH

Co. Meath CIS

1 Brews Hill, Navan.

Tel: (046) 907 4086

MONAGHAN

Monaghan CIS

23 North Road, Monaghan Town.

Tel: (047) 82 622

OFFALY

Co. Offaly CIS

Level One, Bridge Centre, Tullamore.

Tel: (057) 935 2204

ROSCOMMON

Co. Roscommon CIS

18 Castle View, Castle Street, Roscommon Town.

Tel: (090) 662 7922

SLIGO

Co. Sligo CIS

8 Lower John Street, Sligo.

Tel: (071) 915 1133

TIPPERARY

Co. Tipperary CIS

34-35 Croke Street, Thurles.

Tel: (0504) 22 399

WATERFORD CITY AND COUNTY

Waterford CIS

37 Lower Yellow Road, Waterford City.

Tel: (051) 351 133

WESTMEATH

Co. Westmeath CIS

St Mary's Square, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Tel: (090) 647 8851



WEXFORD

Co. Wexford CIS

28 Henrietta Street, Wexford.

Tel: (053) 914 2012

WICKLOW

Co. Wicklow CIS

Unit 3 & 4, The Boulevard, Quinsboro Road, Bray.

Tel: (01) 286 0666

ORGANISATION INDEX

A

Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland	62
Agriculture Appeals Office	40
An Post	68
ANEC – European Association for the Co-ordination of Consumer Representation in Standardisation	62
Appeals Administration Unit (education)	50
Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board	42
Arts Council	105
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants	101
Association of Occupational Therapists of Ireland.....	97

B

Bar Council.....	99
BEUC-European Consumers' Organisation	62
Bord Altranais	94
Bord Gáis	70
Bord Pleanála.....	45
Broadcasting Commission of Ireland	103
Broadcasting Complaints Commission...	102

C

Censorship of Publications Board.....	104
Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland	86
Chambers Ireland.....	66

Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, Irish Branch.....	62
Citizens Information Board	1, 7
Citizens Information Services.....	11, 108–15
Coimisinéir Teanga.....	28
Commission for Aviation Regulation	66
Commission for Energy Regulation.....	69
Commission for Taxi Regulation	81
Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime	44
Commissioner for Environmental Information	13
Companies Registration Office.....	64
Competition Authority.....	64
ComReg – Commission for Communications Regulation.....	67
Construction Industry Federation	82
Consumers' Association of Ireland.....	60
Court of Justice of the European Communities.....	17
Courts Service.....	14
Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal	43

D

Data Protection Commissioner	27
Dental Council.....	94
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	75
Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP)	21
Disability Appeals Officer	37
Disabled Drivers and Disabled Passengers Medical Board of Appeal	40
Driving Instructor Register of Ireland.....	80



E

Electrical Contractors Safety and Standards Association71

Electricity Supply Board (ESB)69

Electro-Technical Council of Ireland..... 63

Employment Appeals Tribunal 56

Engineers Ireland (Institution of Engineers of Ireland)101

Environmental Protection Agency 46

Equality Authority.....28

Equality Tribunal..... 29

ESB 69

European Commission Representation in Ireland 106

European Consumer Centre60

European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)60

European Consumer Consultative Group..61

European Court of Human Rights 17

European Ombudsman 106

F

Fáilte Ireland 72

FÁS Client Services..... 52

Financial Regulator86

Financial Services Ombudsman88

FIN-NET – EU Out-of-Court Complaints Network for Financial Services 89

Food Safety Authority of Ireland 74

Forest Service Appeals Unit 41

G

Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission 42

H

Health and Safety Authority 57

Health and Social Care Professionals Council96

Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).....39

Health Insurance Authority.....90

Health Service Executive (HSE)34

Heritage Council 105

Human Rights Commission..... 27

I

Iarnród Éireann 79

IBEC – Irish Business and Employers Confederation 65

ICTU Appeals Board..... 57

Independent Adjudicator of the Law Society99

Independent Monitoring Committee (asylum seekers)20

Injuriesboard.ie (Personal Injuries Assessment Board)..... 14

Inspector of Prisons 43

Institute of Certified Public Accountants in Ireland101

Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland101

Institute of Incorporated Public Accountants101

Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers	82
Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland.....	84
Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy	98
Irish Association of Funeral Directors	78
Irish Association of Social Workers.....	98
Irish Association of Speech and Language Therapists.....	97
Irish Auctioneers and Valuers Institute.....	82
Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority.....	91
Irish Banking Federation	92
Irish Film Classification Office	104
Irish Financial Services Appeals Tribunal ..	88
Irish Financial Services Regulatory Authority	86
Irish Hotels Federation.....	73
Irish Insurance Federation	92
Irish League of Credit Unions	92
Irish Medicines Board	77
Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service.....	53
Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute	97
Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists	97

L

Labour Court.....	55
Labour Relations Commission	54
Law Society of Ireland.....	98
Legal Aid Board.....	19
Legal Services Ombudsman	99

M

Marine Institute.....	76
Medical Council.....	93
Mental Health Commission	38
Milk Quota Appeals Tribunal.....	41

N

National Consumer Agency	58
National Council for Special Education....	51
National Crime Victims Helpline.....	44
National Disability Authority.....	30
National Educational Welfare Board	50
National Employment Rights Authority... 55	
National Property Services Regulatory Authority	81
National Standards Authority of Ireland..	63

O

Office for Internet Safety.....	84
Office of Environmental Enforcement.....	47
Office of the Chief Inspector of Social Services.....	39
Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement.....	64
Office of the Information Commissioner	13
Office of the Ombudsman	24
Office of the Ombudsman for Children ...	26
Office of the Pensions Ombudsman.....	90
Office of the Press Ombudsman	103
Office of the Registrar of Friendly Societies.....	91
Official Languages Commissioner.....	28



Ombudsman for the Defence Forces 45
 Opticians Board 94

P

Pensions Board 89
 Personal Injuries Assessment Board
 (Injuriesboard.ie) 14
 Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland 95
 President of the European Parliament 107
 Press Council of Ireland 104
 Prison Visiting Committees 43
 Private Residential Tenancies Board 49
 Private Security Authority 72
 Psychological Society of Ireland 98

R

Radiological Protection Institute
 of Ireland 46, 77
 Railway Safety Commission 79
 Referendum Commission 32
 Refugee Appeals Tribunal 53
 Refugee Legal Service 19
 Register of Electrical Contractors of
 Ireland (RECI) 71
 Registrar of Credit Unions 88
 Regtel – Regulator of Premium Rate
 Telecommunications Services 67
 Restaurants Association of Ireland 78
 Rights Commissioner Service 54
 Road Safety Authority 78
 Royal Institute of the Architects
 of Ireland 100
 RTÉ 102

S

School Transport Appeals Board 51
 Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority 76
 Single Payment Appeals Committee
 (agriculture) 41
 Small Claims Court 15
 Social Welfare Appeals Office 32
 Social Welfare Tribunal 33
 Society of Chartered Surveyors 100
 Society of the Irish Motor Industry
 (SIMI) 80
 SOLVIT 61
 Special Education Appeals Board 51
 Standards in Public Office Commission 31
 State Examinations Commission 52

T

Tax Appeals Commissioners 33
 Teaching Council 99
 Tourist Accommodation Approvals
 (TAA) 73
 Tourist Accommodation Management
 Services (TAMS) 73

V

Veterinary Council 95

SUBJECT INDEX

A

accommodation.....	49
accountants.....	91, 100
advertising.....	62
advocacy.....	6
agriculture.....	40, 75
Alternative Dispute Resolution.....	5, 62
arbitration.....	6, 62
architects.....	100
arts.....	105
asylum seekers.....	19, 53
auctioneers.....	82
auditors.....	91

B

banks.....	86, 92
broadcasting.....	102
builders.....	82
business regulation.....	64–85

C

car dealers.....	80
censorship.....	104
chambers of commerce.....	66
charities.....	85
Charter of Rights.....	7
hospital patients.....	38
children, ombudsman.....	26
Citizens Information.....	11, 108–15
clinical nutrition.....	97

communications.....	67
company regulation.....	64–85
competition.....	64
complaints (general).....	8
consumers (general).....	8, 58–63
counsellors.....	98
courts.....	5, 14–21
credit unions.....	88, 92
crime (injuries, victims).....	43
criminal law.....	20
Customer Service Action Plans (public bodies).....	23

D

damages (courts system).....	15–16
data protection.....	27
Defence Forces (ombudsman).....	45
dentists.....	94
dietitians.....	97
disability.....	30, 36
drivers.....	40
dispute resolution.....	5
doctors.....	93
driving.....	78, 80
drugs and medicines.....	77

E

education.....	50–52
teachers.....	99
elections.....	31
electricity (supply, contractors)....	63, 69–71
employers' body.....	65



employment	54–57
enforcement (general)	5
enforcement bodies (general).....	24
engineers	101
environment	46–49
information	13
Environmental Health Officers.....	75
equality.....	28–30
European bodies	
consumer agencies.....	60
courts	17
EU authorities	106
FIN-NET (financial services)	89
European Convention on	
Human Rights	18
F	
farming	40
films, censorship.....	104
financial services	
enforcement bodies	86–91
trade associations.....	91
food safety	74–77
forestry	41
Freedom of Information.....	11
friendly societies	91
funeral directors	78
G	
gardaí	42
gas (supply, contractors).....	69–71

H

health.....	34–40
environmental issues	46, 75
insurance.....	90
medical bodies.....	93–95
other professional bodies.....	96–98
health and safety (work).....	57
heritage	105
HomeBond (guarantee scheme)	83
hospitals	38
hotels	72
housing	49, 81
human rights	27

I

immigration	53
industrial relations.....	54–57
information	11–13
injuries (compensation).....	14, 43
insurance	92
health	90
internet.....	84
Irish language	28

J

justice	42–44
lawyers	98

L

labour agencies	54
law enforcement	42
lawyers.....	98
legal aid	19
liability (personal injuries)	14
local authorities (standards of service)	23, 49

M

marine	
aquaculture	42
seafood, fisheries.....	76
mediation	6
medicines	77
mental health	38
motor dealers	80

N

newspapers	103
noise (pollution).....	48
nurses.....	94
nursing home subventions	37

O

occupational therapy	97
ombudsman.....	24
children	26
Defence Forces.....	45
European.....	106
finance.....	88
gardaí.....	42

legal services	99
pensions.....	90
press	104
opticians	94

P

pensions	89
Personal Advocacy Service	7
personal information	
data protection	27
Freedom of Information	13
personal injuries	14
pharmacists	95
physiotherapy.....	97
planning.....	45
pollution.....	48
postal services	68
price-fixing (competition)	64
prisons	43
privacy	27
property.....	81
architects, surveyors	100
psychologists	98
public bodies (information).....	12
public office	31
public services (standards)	22
publications, censorship.....	104

R

radiation	46
radio	102
railway	79



referendums.....	32	teachers.....	99
refugees.....	19, 53	telecommunications.....	67
restaurants.....	78	telephone.....	67
		television.....	67, 102
S		therapists.....	98
schools.....	50–52	tour operators.....	66
Section 15 and 16 manuals.....	12	tourism.....	72
security industry.....	72	trade unions.....	57
small claims.....	15	training (FÁS).....	52
social services.....	39	transport.....	79, 81
social welfare.....	32	schools.....	51
social workers.....	98	travel.....	66
special education.....	51		
speech and language therapy.....	97	U	
standards of service.....	7, 22	undertakers.....	78
certification.....	63		
Supplementary Welfare Allowance.....	38	V	
surveyors.....	100	vets.....	95
T		W	
tax.....	33	waste licences.....	48
taxis.....	81	water supply.....	49



FEEDBACK

Where to Complain

We would appreciate your comments on this booklet.

Please tell us what you found useful and what further information or other topics you would like to see in future editions.

Was the information useful?

Was it easy to understand?

Please list any sections which you found difficult to understand.

What did you think of the way that the information is laid out, the order of topics etc.?

Are there any improvements or inclusions which you would like to suggest for the next edition?

Please return your comments to:

**Information Publications
Citizens Information Board**
George's Quay House
43 Townsend Street
Dublin 2

Tel: (01) 605 9000
Email: publicationsfeedback@ciboard.ie

Publications and resources from the Citizens Information Board:

Leaflets and factsheets	Wallcharts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits and Taxes • Information for School Leavers • Disability Information Factsheets • Information Factsheets for Older People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits and Taxes (rates of payment for the main entitlements) • Disability Wallchart • Information for Older People
Booklets and directories	Periodicals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement guide • Directory of National Voluntary Organisations and Other Agencies (price €12) • Entitlements for Over Sixties • Entitlements for People with Disabilities • Employment Rights Explained • Where to Complain – a guide to enforcement and redress bodies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate – the journal of developments in social services, policy and legislation in Ireland (price €15.85 per year) • EU Supplement – published quarterly with Relate • Voice: Influencing Social Policy – the social policy journal • Speaking Up for Advocacy – the advocacy journal

Publications are available from Citizens Information Services or directly from the Citizens Information Board. They can also be accessed online at www.citizensinformationboard.ie/publications. Publications are available in a number of formats including large print, Braille, audio and CD-ROM on request. All publications are free unless otherwise stated.

The Citizens Information Board is the statutory body which supports the provision of information, advice and advocacy on the broad range of social and civil services to the public. It provides the Citizens Information website and supports the voluntary network of Citizens Information Services and the Citizens Information Phone Service.

Citizens **Information** 

LOG ON

www.citizensinformation.ie

LO-CALL

1890 777 121 Open Mon to Fri, 9am to 9pm

DROP IN

For your local centre, see Golden Pages listing