



STANDARDS OF SERVICE

Phone

We will answer all phone calls within six rings and give the name of our organisation. Where an individual member of staff is not available your call will be taken by a colleague, or voice-mail. Answerphone machines will only be used outside normal office hours, on public holidays, during staff development, in cases of emergency or in exceptional circumstances.

Correspondence

We will acknowledge all initial letters, faxes and e-mails within 2 working days of receiving them and all subsequent correspondence within 4 working days. We will update you with progress on your complaint handling review at least every six weeks.

Meetings

We are a small organisation, so we suggest you ring us first to ask about making an appointment. We will always see you within 10 minutes of your appointment time.

Information and openness

You can get information, in plain language, about our plans and activities by phoning, writing to our offices, e-mailing us at enquiries@pirc.gsi.gov.uk or visiting our website www.pirc.scotland.gov.uk. Where possible, pages within the website comply with the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) priority 2 guidelines (AA). Many priority 3 guidelines (AAA) have also been followed in the creation of the site.

We will deal with other requests for information in line with the Scottish Government's Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. We will give you information we are able to issue within 20 days of receiving your request.

Consultation

We consult our contacts and partners regularly through day-to-day contact, meetings and surveys. Your views on our operations, and your understanding of our role, are important to us.

Accounts and payments to suppliers

We follow the Government's policy on payment performance and aim to pay all invoices not in dispute within 10 days (or the agreed terms if different).

Our performance

If you are not happy with the quality of our service we want to know about it. We take all complaints seriously and have an effective, easy-to-use complaints procedure.

If you complain directly to the member of staff dealing with you it may be possible to resolve the problem quickly on the spot.

You can make a formal complaint by contacting our Head of HR and Corporate Services (HHRCS). We will acknowledge all formal complaints within two working days. The HHRCS will ensure a detailed investigation of your complaint is carried out by the most appropriate person who will respond within 20 working days. This is to allow the individual to send you a full and considered reply. If he/she needs more time to investigate your complaint he/she will contact you regularly to keep you informed.

If we do not uphold our own standards, we will apologise, try and explain what happened and tell you what actions we are taking to make sure the problem does not happen again.

If you are dissatisfied with the response from the PIRC, you have the right under the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Act 2002 to make a complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and ask for a review of my decision. The SPSO is the final stage for complaints about most organisations that provide public services in Scotland, including the PIRC. Their service is independent, free and confidential. You can contact the SPSO for advice and request a complaint form.

The SPSO will normally only consider a complaint after you have completed the PIRC' complaints procedure. The SPSO cannot normally look at complaints:

- more than 12 months after you became aware of the matter you want to complain about,
or
- that have been or are being considered in court.

The address for the SPSO is Bridgeside House, 99 McDonald Road, Edinburgh, EH7 4NS.

You can also write to them at the following Freepost address: Freepost SPSO.

Alternatively, you may contact them on: Telephone: 0800 377 7330 Fax: 0800 377 7331.

Contact us Our normal office hours are 9.00am to 4.45pm, Monday – Friday (excluding public holidays). You can write to us at Hamilton House, Hamilton Business Park, Caird Park, Hamilton ML3 0QA. Alternatively, you may contact us on: Telephone: 01698 542900 E-mail: enquiries@pirc.gsi.gov.uk Website: www.pirc.scot.

We welcome enquiries and complaints in languages other than English. If you would like to speak to us in a language other than English, we can arrange interpreting support. Some of our publicity material is available in other languages and formats. Please contact us for further details.