

**CUSTOMER CHARTER**

Document History

**Document Owner** The owner of this document is: David McCallum (Director of Corporate Services)

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| 2              | 31.07.13      |                        | Change of Name     | **             |
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**Approvals** This document requires approvals to be signed off and filed in project files

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| Hazel Campbell | CEO            |               |                 |         |
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## The Ulster-Scots Agency

### Customer Charter

The Ulster-Scots Agency is committed to providing and maintaining a high standard of quality service to our customers. This Charter sets out the standards of service you may expect from the Agency.

### About the Agency

The Agency was established as a part of the North/South Language Body set up under the Belfast Agreement of 1998. The other part of the Language Body is Foras na Gaeilge which has responsibility for the development of the Irish (Gaelic) language. Each of these agencies has its own Board whose members together constitute the Board of the North/ South Language Body. The Agency is jointly funded by the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the Republic of Ireland and is responsible to the North/South Ministerial Council.

The Agency has its main office in Belfast with a regional office in Raphoe, Co. Donegal

| <b>Headquarters:</b>   | <b>Regional Office:</b>   |
|--|---|
| Ulster-Scots Agency<br>Ulster Scots Agency<br>The Corn Exchange<br>31 Gordon Street<br>Belfast<br>BT 1 2LG<br><br>T: 028 9023 1113<br>E: info@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk | Ulster-Scots Agency **<br>William Street<br>Raphoe<br>Co Donegal<br><br>T: 00353 7491 73876<br>E:<br>ulsterscotsagency@eircom.net |

Our remit is to promote the Ulster-Scots language culture and heritage both in Northern Ireland and throughout the island of Ireland.

### General Information

We will provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on our policies, schemes and services on our website [www.ulsterscotsagency.com](http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com) and in print format using clear and simple language, and will use clear language in the design of our application forms.

### Official Languages

We will provide quality services in English.

## **Telephone Service**

- Calls to the Ulster-Scots Agency switchboard will be answered as soon as possible.
- All callers will be referred to the appropriate staff member / section.
- Agency staff will deal with you in a helpful and courteous manner and provide you with as much information as possible in relation to your query.
- We will get back to you within an agreed timeframe if we cannot deal with your query immediately.
- We will deal promptly with messages left on voicemail and return calls as early as possible.

## **Written Correspondence (including email, fax)**

- We aim to respond to all written correspondence within 15 working days.
- If it is not possible to give a full reply within this period, we will send you an interim reply with an indication of when the matter will be finalised.
- Out of office facilities will be used on email, where necessary and appropriate, to ensure the customer is given another point of contact within the Agency.
- We will ensure that correspondence will have the contact details of the staff member dealing with your correspondence.

## **Visiting the Agency**

- We will ensure that our offices are accessible to people with special needs and provide maximum assistance to enable you to conduct your business.
- All visitors to the Agency office will be greeted in a courteous and professional manner.
- Where an appointment with a member of staff has been pre-arranged, on being welcomed to the Agency we will take your name and advise the appropriate person you are waiting in the reception area.
- Where no appointment has been made in advance of the visit, we will ask for a brief description of the nature of your query in order to enable us to refer you to the most appropriate member of staff. Should this member of staff be unavailable at this time, we will ask your name and for a contact number which will be passed onto this member of staff who will contact you at their earliest convenience.

## **Attending and Participating at Events held outside the Agency**

- All Agency staff will act in a courteous and professional manner when attending and participating at work related events held outside the Agency – whether Agency organised or externally organised.
- During events all staff will endeavour to deal with all customer queries relating to the cultural tradition of Ulster-Scots or the work of the Ulster-Scots Agency in a professional and helpful manner.
- On occasion, members of staff may not be able to respond to a specific query due to insufficient information being available. In this case we will offer to consult with colleagues or the relevant organisation and if the customer is in agreement, we will ask your name and for a contact number which will enable us to contact you as soon as an informed response can be provided.
- We will ensure that members of staff attending and participating in events outside the Agency can be identified as Agency staff by displaying the Agency logo.

## **Administration of Grants**

The Agency operates a range of grant programmes to help deliver our strategic aims and objectives. The grant programmes are described in our Financial Assistance Scheme which you can access online at [www.ulsterscotagency.org/community-projects/applying-for-funding](http://www.ulsterscotagency.org/community-projects/applying-for-funding)

The Scheme explains the type of assistance available, the criteria for funding and the general conditions applying to all grants approved under the Scheme. The Scheme will be supported by further detailed guidance which you can obtain from the Agency Grants Team.

We will make every effort to process valid applications, and claims within the time limits specified within the Financial Assistance Scheme Guidance. If the volume of applications and claims exceed our expectations and we cannot process your application or claim within a reasonable timescale we will let you know and give you an indication of the timescale for processing.

## **Consistency and Impartiality**

We will administer all our grant schemes in a consistent and impartial manner. We will treat our customers with respect and courtesy and ensure there is no discrimination on the grounds of gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability or race.

If you are not content with the Agency's decision in relation to an application for grant, the Agency has an Appeal Process which can be accessed on our website at [www.ulsterscotagency.org/community-projects/applying-for-funding](http://www.ulsterscotagency.org/community-projects/applying-for-funding). If you wish to appeal a decision you need to follow the steps set out in the Appeals Process.

## **Project Advice**

If you wish to discuss the implementation of a project or a project concept you should contact our Development Officers in the first instance, who will be happy to meet with you at your convenience.

Contact details of Development Officer's:

### **\*\*\*Development Officer–**

Catriona Holmes – [cholmes@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk](mailto:cholmes@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk)

Tel: (028) 9023 1113

### **Development Officer - West**

Derek Reaney – [derekulsterscotsa@eircom.net](mailto:derekulsterscotsa@eircom.net)

Tel: +353 (7491) 73 876

Mob: 078 4327 9912

### **Development Officer – North East**

Gary Blair – [gary@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk](mailto:gary@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk)

Tel: (028) 9023 1113

Mob: 07702 831 341

### **Development Officer – South East**

Jane Wallace – [jane@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk](mailto:jane@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk)

Tel: (028) 9023 1113

Mob: 07872 952 654

## **Complaints**

We aim to deliver the best possible service to our customers. If you are dissatisfied with the quality of service you have received you have the right to complain. We recommend you discuss the matter initially with your usual contact within the Agency; however if the matter cannot be resolved you can contact our Customer Service Co-ordinator (contact details below). All complaints received will be acknowledged within 5 working days and processed within 20 working days.

The Agency will retain a record of all complaints received and the action taken.

## **Customer Service Co-ordinator**

Mr. David McCallum  
Director of Corporate Services  
The Corn Exchange  
31 Gordon Street  
Belfast  
BT 1 2LG

Email: [mccallumd@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk](mailto:mccallumd@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk)\*\*  
Telephone: (028) 9023 1113

If you are not content with how a formal complaint has been dealt with by us you have the right to refer the matter for external review to:

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Complaints  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast  
BT1 6HN

## **Freedom of Information**

When you seek access to records held by the Agency every effort will be made to make these available to you. You can apply for access to certain records under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003. All Freedom of Information requests received will be acknowledged within 5 working days and processed within 20 working days.

If we do not hold the information you are seeking you will be advised accordingly.

## **Freedom of Information Officer**

\*\*\*Mr. David McCallum  
Director of Corporate Services  
The Corn Exchange  
31 Gordon Street  
Belfast  
BT 1 2LG

Email: [mccallumd@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk](mailto:mccallumd@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk)  
Telephone: (028) 9023 1113

## **Monitoring and evaluating our performance**

We will evaluate our performance against the standards set out in this Charter. The results of the evaluation of our performance during the year will be published in our Annual Report.

## **Feedback**

We welcome and encourage you to provide us with your views, comments and suggestions on delivery of services to you. Feedback can be provided by writing to the Agency, emailing [info@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk](mailto:info@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk) or by completing our online form at [www.ulsterscotsagency.com/contact-us/feedback](http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com/contact-us/feedback).

## **Where to get more information**

You can get additional copies of this Charter on request and in electronic format on our website [www.ulsterscotsagency.com](http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com).

## **Contact the Agency**

Ulster Scots Agency  
The Corn Exchange  
31 Gordon Street  
Belfast  
BT 1 2LG

Email: [info@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk](mailto:info@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk)  
Telephone: (028) 9023 1113  
Website: [www.ulsterscotsagency.com](http://www.ulsterscotsagency.com)

## **Office Opening Hours**

The Agency office in Belfast is open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.