

CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTER

Our commitment to high standards in every interaction

September 2025



Highlands and Islands Enterprise
Iomairt na Gàidhealtachd's nan Eilean

Our Customer Service Charter

We aim to deliver an excellent customer experience and the highest possible standards for everyone who contacts us. We believe this can best be achieved by:

- ✓ Treating you with fairness and respect.
- ✓ Using clear language and honest communication.
- ✓ Listening to your views and taking action to improve.
- ✓ Making our services accessible, efficient, and responsive to your needs.
- ✓ Minimising our environmental impact through digital-first and sustainable practices.

Our key commitments to you

- We will provide a friendly and welcoming service.
- We will deal promptly and efficiently with your phone calls, written correspondence and visits to our offices.
- We will give you details of the person/team dealing with your enquiry.
- We will try to answer your enquiries the first time you contact us. If the person you are contacting is unavailable, an alternative contact will be provided, or you can leave a message.
- We will deal with all enquiries fairly and with discretion.
- We will endeavour to help you access our services, and we will make all reasonable adjustments to meet any specific needs you may have. Information on accessing our services is available [here](#).
- We provide 24/7 access through our website at www.hie.co.uk and almost all of our services are accessible online.
- We aim to pay all agreed and valid invoices within 10 days (or agreed terms if different).
- We aim to reply to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act within 20 working days.
- If you have reason to complain about any aspect of service, we will deal with your complaints in line with **our service standards**, which can be found [here](#).

We are available 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, and can be reached by calling: 01463 245 245. Details of our office locations can be found [here](#).

We welcome correspondence in English and Gaelic, and you can request information in other languages, audio or in Braille.

We will provide reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs, including formats and communication methods.

BSL (British Sign Language) users can contact us using the online British Sign Language interpreting service for public authorities (www.contactscotland-bsl.org).

Contacting us by phone:

- When you call our main reception number we will answer your call promptly during office hours and respond to voicemail messages within two working days, unless we have told you otherwise.
- If you call a member of staff on a direct number, we will aim to resolve your enquiry as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- We will tell you the name of the person you are speaking to and if your call has to be transferred, we will pass on your name and details of your enquiry so you won't have to repeat yourself.
- If the person you wish to speak to is not available, we will suggest a time when they can be contacted or arrange to have your call returned, normally within two working days.

Contacting us in writing:

When you write to us, e.g. email, web form or letter, we will:

- acknowledge your enquiry within two working days and ensure that you receive a response within 10 working days.
- inform you if a full reply may take longer, giving you timescales for when to expect a response.
- tell you in our written response who is dealing with your enquiry and provide their contact details.
- make use of 'out of office' auto replies on email to advise when staff are absent, offering alternative contact details.
- respond to you in clear language, avoiding jargon.
- provide a reply in an alternative format if you require a reasonable adjustment, for example larger print, Braille or audio.

If you submit a query to HIE or any of our staff on social media channels, such as LinkedIn, we will request your email address or other contact details, so we can respond to you directly through official HIE communication channels, i.e. email, letter or phone.

Visiting our offices:

- If you have an appointment at one of our offices, we will meet you at the time of your appointment.
- Not all our offices have a full-time reception service, however if you visit in-person contact information will be displayed at the entrance.
- We will aim to deal with your enquiry as quickly as possible and will arrange to make a further appointment to see a member of staff when specialist advice and services may be needed.
- You can find information on all our office locations [here](#). All our HIE occupied buildings, with the exception of our Portree office, are accessible by wheelchair. If

you have any specific requirements, you can contact us ahead of your visit so we can make reasonable adjustments.

Your comments and complaints

We value your feedback and want to hear from you as this helps us to improve. Please send any comments, compliments or complaints to: customer.service@hient.co.uk .

We hope you don't need to complain, but if you have a complaint about any aspect of our service, we want to know so that we can investigate the circumstances and provide you with a clear response. If something has gone wrong, we will do our best to put it right and to help prevent a similar situation arising in future. Full details of our complaints handling policy are [here](#).

Information and openness

We are committed to open and transparent communication. We will:

- publish key documents including our strategy, operating plan and audited annual accounts [here](#).
- report on funding approvals we have provided to organisations [here](#).
- comply with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOI) 2002 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which governs the way in which public organisations process requests for information. Details of how to exercise your rights under the Act can be found [here](#).
- adhere to our obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which set out the key principles, rights and obligations for the processing of personal data. Our privacy notice is available [here](#).

How you can help

- Provide us with the correct information needed to deal with your enquiry.
- Arrive on time for appointments or let us know of any changes.
- Treat our staff and contractors with courtesy and respect. HIE has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of unacceptable behaviour towards or staff or customers.
- Let us know about any changes to your contact details.
- Tell us straight away if you are unhappy with any aspect of our service, giving us the opportunity to put it right.
- Provide feedback when you are pleased with the service you have received so that we can maintain and encourage good practice across Highlands and Islands Enterprise.