

# Customer Care Charter



**hse**ni  
CONTROLLING RISK TOGETHER

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HSENI seeks to promote better management of health and safety at work, through systematic approaches to identifying hazards and assessing and controlling risks.



**Jim Keyes** Chief Executive

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) came into being on 1 April 1999 as an executive Non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. HSENI is a Crown body and its staff are civil servants.

HSENI's business is to ensure that risks to people's health and safety from work activity are properly controlled, in ways that are proportionate to risk, allow for technological progress and pay due regard to costs as well as benefits. In all that it does, HSENI seeks to promote better management of health and safety at work, through systematic approaches to identifying hazards and assessing and controlling risks.

Our prime purpose is to ensure that statutory health and safety standards are maintained. Wherever possible, we work in partnership with employers, trade unions, employees and others to ensure that places of work are made safe and without risk to health, so far as is reasonably practicable.

We are fully committed to providing a first class service to all of our customers in line with the principles of Service First. I hope you will find our Customer Care Charter informative about what our role is, how we carry out our work and the standards of service you can expect to receive from us. You will also find a section devoted to advising you what to do if you feel that HSENI has failed to meet our standards or has let you down in any way.

I would welcome any comments on the quality of service we provide and any suggestions on how this service might be improved.

**JIM KEYES**  
Chief Executive

While HSENI is the enforcing authority for health and safety in most areas of employment and is also responsible for investigating gas safety incidents in the home, there are exceptions:

District Councils are also enforcing authorities for health and safety at work. The division of enforcement responsibilities between HSENI and the District Councils is as follows:

HSENI	District Councils
Factories	Offices
Building Sites	Retail and Wholesale Shops
Farms	Tyre and Exhaust Fitters
Motor Vehicle Repairs	Restaurants, Take Away Food Shops, Mobile Snack Bars and Catering Services
Quarries	Hotels, Guest Houses, Residential Homes, etc
Chemical Plants	Wholesale and Retail Warehouses
Schools and Universities	Leisure and Entertainment Facilities (Privately Owned)
Leisure and Entertainment	Exhibitions Facilities
Fairgrounds	Religious Activities
Hospitals and Nursing Homes	Undertakers
District Councils	Therapeutic and Beauty Services
Fire and Police	Animal Care
Government Departments	
Any Other Workplace Not Listed Under District Councils	

If you have a query about an area of employment for which District Councils are responsible you should contact the Environmental Health Department of your local District Council whose address and telephone number can be found in the telephone directory or through the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Emissions into the atmosphere and other related environmental issues such as discharges into rivers are dealt with by:

Environment and Heritage Service  
 Klondyke Building  
 Cromac Avenue  
 BELFAST  
 BT7 2JA  
 Tel: 0845 302 0008  
 Fax: 028 9056 9264



Under the law, the duty of care is placed mainly upon employers and the self-employed to look after the health and safety of themselves, their employees and any persons affected by their work activities, by doing whatever is reasonably practicable.

HSENI is responsible for enforcing a wide range of health and safety laws.

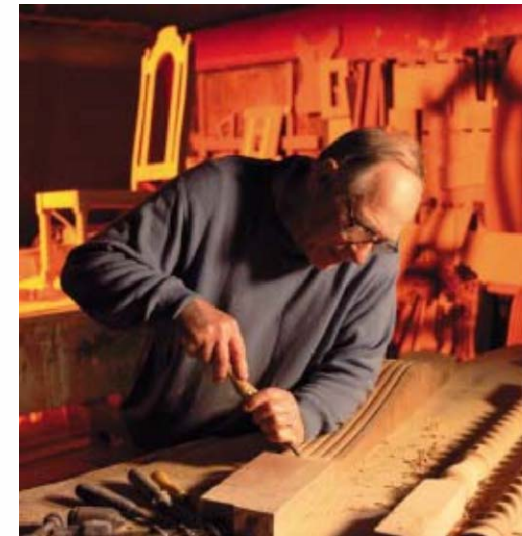
**These include:**

- the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 (the 1978 Order) as amended by the Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998;
- many Regulations made under the 1978 Order, for example the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)
- and the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH);
- other laws which cover particular hazards, such as parts of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 and the Control of Pesticides Regulations, both of which concern pesticides;
- laws which apply to particular industries, such as quarries and transport undertakings;
- earlier laws which apply across a range of industries, but not in all workplaces, such as the Factories Act (Northern Ireland) 1965 and Regulations made under it.

HSENI staff respond to enquiries and requests for information from employers, employees and other members of the public on a wide range of health and safety at work issues.

Our trained staff investigate complaints against employers in relation to:

- unsafe and unhealthy working practices and environments;
- unsafe machinery;
- unsatisfactory health and safety training;
- inadequate protection for the general public, eg unfenced building sites.





of each case. Every decision to prosecute is reviewed by our senior management. Our policy on enforcement action is set out in our Enforcement Policy Statement, which can be obtained from our website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk).



Our Information and Advice Centre at 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast is open to the public between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and between 9.00am and 4.30pm on Fridays (excluding Bank and Public holidays). We provide a wide range of reference material on site as well as internet access to additional material. If you are unable to call in person, our freephone "Helpline" service provides access to advice and guidance. Calls received outside opening hours are recorded and dealt with the next working day.

More information about the range of services provided by the Information and Advice Centre is contained in our brochure "A World of Information and Advice" which is available from our office and on our website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk).

**We also:**

- promote health and safety awareness through events such as conferences, exhibitions, seminars and workshops;
- provide health and safety information and advice;
- inspect places of work such as factories, building sites, quarries, fairgrounds, farms, railways and chemical plants and other hazardous installations to ensure that statutory minimum health and safety standards are maintained and where necessary improved to reduce the number of accidents and cases of ill health at work;
- investigate work-related accidents and cases of ill health.



Our investigation or inspection may result in formal enforcement action including prosecution. Decisions on whether to recommend prosecution depend entirely on the merits and circumstances



- treat information that you give us in confidence unless we are required to disclose it for legal reasons;
- respond to requests for leaflets (subject to availability) within five working days.

**Openness**

We believe there should be no secrecy about how HSENI is run, who is in charge and whether we are meeting the standards published in this document.

So that you can find out how we are doing, we will monitor our performance against these standards and publish the results in our annual reports. We will be open and honest about our failures as well as our successes. We will also include details of the kinds of complaints and comments we have received from our customers about the service and what we are doing to improve it.

Copies of our annual reports will be available on request, free of charge, from our Ladas Drive office (see address on page 8) and our website [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk).

**Improving Our Service**

We are keen to maintain and improve our high level of customer service and to that end welcome any comment, either complimentary or critical, that you feel might contribute to this aim. It is not necessary that you give your name if you do not wish to do so. Simply write to, or telephone and ask for Dermot Breen, Head of Services Division (see page 8 for contact details). We also plan to seek out views on our service performance through an independently conducted customer survey every three years. The results, which we will publish in our annual reports, will assist us in monitoring our performance in providing existing services and helping us to develop new services where needs are identified.

We believe that we can only be successful through working in co-operation and with the support of our customers. That is why we are committed to providing effective and efficient services in a professional manner. To ensure that we live up to this commitment we have set ourselves the following customer care standards.

**We will:**

- identify ourselves by name on the telephone and in letters, and be courteous and helpful when you contact us. Field staff will carry warrants;
- meet personal callers, with or without an appointment, within 5 minutes of arrival;
- provide a response to an enquiry immediately if possible and, in any event, within ten working days. If the matter is complex or requires detailed investigation, we will contact you within 10 working days telling you what further steps we will take and letting you know when you can expect a full response. If we cannot give an answer within this time, we will tell you what further investigation we believe is necessary and let you know when you can expect a full response. We will keep you informed of any significant developments in the investigation of your enquiry;

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We also carry out regular customer surveys to help us find out exactly what you think about our publications and events – how relevant they are and how well, or badly, they are produced or delivered. Your views are taken into account when we plan for the future.

We also consult a wide range of interested bodies and organisations, including employers' and employees' representative bodies and also bodies representing groups covered by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, about any new legislation that is being considered, or any changes in current rules, regulations or policies. We will consider all the information we receive and the views expressed before new legislation or policies are made.

Our staff welcome comments and suggestions on how to improve services and are continually trying to improve the way customers are treated.

If you are pleased with the service you have received, please let us know – this helps the staff dealing with you to know that they are providing the right kind of service and that their efforts are appreciated by those who matter most.

### You can help us by:

- letting us know if you cannot attend a meeting;
- making sure that, when you contact us by telephone or in writing, you give us enough information so that we can get back to you if necessary;
- completing any forms fully and clearly.

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Although our objective is to provide a top quality

service, there may be occasions when you believe that you have not received the level of service you are entitled to. If this arises, we are keen to ensure that you bring such instances to our attention so that your concern can be addressed. If we have made a mistake, you will receive an apology and we will take corrective action promptly.

Many concerns arise from misunderstandings and can be resolved by contacting the member of staff with whom you have been dealing. If you would prefer not to contact the member of staff concerned, or if you believe they have not resolved your concern, you can make a formal complaint in writing.

To make a complaint you should write in the first instance to Dermot Breen, Head of Services Division, 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast BT6 9FR (or e-mail [dermot.breen@detini.gov.uk](mailto:dermot.breen@detini.gov.uk)). Mark your envelope "Personal and Confidential". All complaints will be thoroughly investigated. If he cannot respond immediately he will acknowledge your letter within two working days, arrange for your case to be examined and reply to you within 10 working days. If it is not possible to deal with your complaint within this time, for example, because it involves complex matters or requires detailed investigation, we will explain why and let you know when you can expect a response. If you are still dissatisfied you should write to Jim Keyes, Chief Executive of HSENI (at the above

address or e-mail [jim.keyes@detini.gov.uk](mailto:jim.keyes@detini.gov.uk)). The

Chief Executive will reply within 10 working days. If you are still not satisfied you can complain to the Ombudsman in his role as Commissioner for Complaints. The Ombudsman will expect you to have used our complaints procedure before referring a complaint to him/her.

You can find out more about making a complaint to the Ombudsman by:

writing to	The Ombudsman FREEPOST Belfast BT1 6HN
website	<a href="http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk">www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk</a>
e-mail	<a href="mailto:ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk">ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk</a>
telephone	Freephone 0800 343424

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You can contact us by letter, telephone, fax, e-mail or via our website. We also have a freephone Helpline and a textphone. Alternatively, you can call in person at our Information and Advice Centre at our Ladas Drive offices. The normal opening times are from 9.00am to 5.00pm on Monday to Thursday and from 9.00am to 4.30pm on Friday. Disabled parking, access and washroom facilities are available

Contact details are as follows:

**write to or call at** HSENI  
83 Ladas Drive  
Belfast  
BT6 9FR

**Telephone** Information and Advice  
Centre Helpline  
0800 0320 121  
(freephone)  
or 028 9024 3249 for  
other enquiries

**Textphone** 028 9054 6896

**Fax** 028 9023 5383

**E-mail** hseni@detini.gov.uk

**Website** www.hseni.gov.uk

Comments on our service and/or complaints should be addressed to:

Mr Dermot Breen  
Head of Services Division  
HSENI  
83 Ladas Drive  
BELFAST  
BT6 9FR Tel: 028 9054 6852

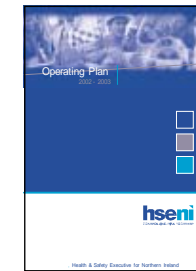


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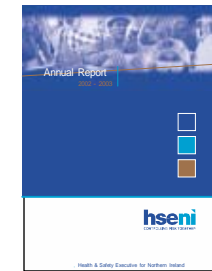
All HSENI Publications are available from the HSENI Website or by contacting HSENI



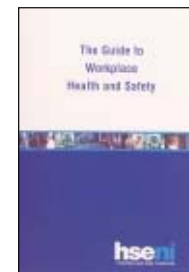
Corporate Plan



Operating Plan



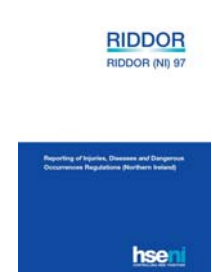
Annual Report



The Guide to Workplace Health and Safety



COSHH(NI)



RIDDOR (NI) 97



Backs in Action



Mental Wellbeing



Legal Framework



