



THE
COMPENSATION
AGENCY

Charter Statement



COMPENSATION AGENCY – CHARTER STATEMENT

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

We recognise the trauma and difficulties suffered by victims of violent crime and we aim to provide a service which is efficient, sensitive and confidential. This charter statement reflects the high standards to which the Agency aspires and the service that you can expect from us. In devising our systems and procedures and in delivering our services the Agency's aim is customer satisfaction. Our success to date has been recognised by the award of a Chartermark.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU THE CUSTOMER

To provide, on request, copies of this Charter Statement and other Agency information leaflets in large print, in Braille and on cassette tape.

To provide a professional and objective service to all our customers.

To attend the scene of major bomb incidents as soon as possible and be available to give advice and assistance on compensation matters.

To carry out our functions with due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

To determine your case as quickly as possible, ensuring that we deal sensitively and considerately with your case at all times, and treat you with respect.

To pay fair and reasonable compensation where liability is accepted.

To treat all of the information you give us confidentially and to use it only for purposes allowed by law.

To treat information you have authorised us to obtain from a third party confidentially and to use it only for purposes allowed by law.

To give you our name (and telephone number) on the telephone, in letters, and at meetings.

To, whenever possible, have the same person deal with your claim.

To communicate with you in plain English and not use jargon.

To reply to any written enquiry from you or your representative within 10 working days.

To respond to all telephone enquiries as soon as possible (at latest, within 24 hours when a return call to you is required).

To attend to callers at the Agency within five minutes and to provide a quiet room which affords confidentiality.

To provide, subject to prior notification, signers for customers who are deaf or hard of hearing,

To provide wheel chair access and toilets for disabled customers.

To continually seek ways in which to improve the service we provide to our customers.

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YOUR RIGHTS

To expect the Agency to live up to all of our commitments to you the customer.

To have your claim for compensation assessed on its own merits and in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

To have the Agency's professional advisors deal with you to the same high standards as are expected of Agency staff.

To receive an interim payment of compensation, providing that liability is accepted, to meet immediate expenses and minimise further loss.

To appeal to the County Court against a decision of the Agency not to pay compensation (excluding tariff).

To appeal to the County Court against the amount of compensation the Agency has offered you (excluding tariff).

To receive reasonable legal costs and expenses if your appeal is successful (excluding tariff).

To complain to the Agency if you are not satisfied with the service we have provided to you and

- to have that complaint thoroughly and objectively investigated, in confidence;
- to receive a full written explanation within 10 working days; and,
- where appropriate, to receive an apology. (See below for details on how to make a complaint)

To complain to your local Member of Parliament if you are not satisfied with the service we have provided to you or our response to your complaint.

HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT

If you are not satisfied with some aspect of the service you have received and wish to make a complaint please contact our Complaints Officer either by telephone or letter or ask a friend to do so on your behalf. The address is:

The Complaints Officer
The Compensation Agency
34 Upper Queen Street
BELFAST
BT1 6FD

Tel: (028) 90547305 Fax: (028) 90542013

Complaints may also be sent to the following E-Mail address: comp-agency@nics.gov.uk

OTHER INFORMATION

The following leaflets / publications are available free of charge at the Agency at the above address or by telephoning the Agency at (028) 90547300 / 90547417.

Criminal Damage Compensation Scheme Leaflet
NI Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2002 - Information Pack
Compensation Agency Corporate and Business Plan
Compensation Agency Annual Report and Accounts

The above are also available (in full or in part) on the Agency's Website: www.compensationni.gov.uk