

# The Offices of the Court of Session



## Customer Charter



# **The Offices of the Court of Session Customer Charter**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Offices of the Court of Session (OCoS) consists of the General, Petitions, Extracts, Court Motions Team and Keeper's Office. They are the interface between the customer, the Court and the place where official court documents and applications are filed. They include the Keeper of the Rolls office which manages the diary of the Court and sets aside blocks of time for the hearing of different categories of court business, assigning the dates of hearings in civil cases.

We want to minimise any inconvenience and reduce any anxiety for our customers by setting out in this document the quality of service that customers can expect. It will also explain how you can give us feedback and how we handle complaints.

We will be professional and responsive, helpful and courteous in all our dealings with our customers. We will keep you informed regarding our performance against our standards via our quarterly newsletter 'The Proof'.

*Our service will be fair, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, age, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or any disability. All users of OCoS will be treated in the same professional manner.*

## **Functions of the OCoS**

Our main function is to undertake the administration of cases brought before the Court of Session as Scotland's supreme civil court.

*Staff at OCoS can give information about procedures and general matters but they cannot give customers legal advice. Staff must also remain impartial at all times and not show favour to any particular customer or group of customers.*

## **General information about the Office**

As part of the Scottish Court Service (SCS) commitment to customer care we will:

- conduct customer surveys to receive feedback in order to help us improve our services and find out the needs of our customers;
- continually review office procedures and standards, to provide a better service;
- welcome suggestions that could lead to improvement in our service;
- participate in local/appropriate Open Day events and community initiatives;
- conduct spot checks of certain transactions;
- operate a confidentiality policy regarding cases where appropriate; There is also information about court cases that is publicly available
- display a copy of this leaflet on the Scottish Courts Service website [www.scotcourts.gov.uk](http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk)

## **Visits to the Offices of the Court of Session**

- The OCoS will be open to the public as follows;
  - from 10.30 to 5.00 on Monday (9.00 – 5.00 Keeper's Office only)
  - from 09.00 to 5.00 on Tuesday to Thursday.
  - from 09.00 to 4.45 on Friday
- If you anticipate problems in finding the office ,maps and directions will be provided.
- Reception areas will be clearly marked.
- Clear signs will be available to assist the customer in finding the court building.
- The accommodation will be clean, adequate and comfortable.
- Visitors to the office will have access to a payphone.
- The toilets will be clean and sufficient.

- Access to the building, the Offices of Court and some of the court rooms can be obtained by wheelchair users.
- Induction loops are installed at public counters.
- Guidance leaflets covering a range of procedures are available both electronically and in hard copy and will be made available on request or may be download from our website [www.scotcourts.gov.uk](http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk).

## VISITORS

- Visitors will be greeted by polite and friendly reception staff.
- Party Litigants will be seen at the time of their appointment.
- We will see all customers in strict rotation, if they do not have an appointment.
- We will provide polite, fully trained staff and treat customers with respect.
- We will respect the privacy of customers, and offer to talk to them out of the hearing of others if appropriate.

## PHONE CALLS

- The OCoS can be contacted by phone in line with our departmental opening times as below;
  - from 10.30 to 5.00 on Monday (9.00 to 5.00 Keeper's Office only)
  - from 09.00 to 5.00 on Tuesday to Thursday.
  - from 09.00 to 4.45 on Friday
- General enquiries will be handled by the Receptionist and then be transferred to the relevant team.
- When answering the telephone we will inform customers that they are through to the department of the Offices of the Court of Session and the name of the person speaking.
- If the person answering the telephone cannot assist we will ask if the call can be returned at a suitable time. We will only transfer calls when it is absolutely necessary, and when we do we will inform the customer and explain the situation to the next officer.
- Where possible we will return calls the same day.
- Individual staff members will have direct line numbers to ensure that customers can reach those handling their case.

- Language line and typetalk facilities will also be available within the OCoS.

## GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- We will write or phone within 2 working days of receiving an enquiry.
- We will respond to enquiries made to [supremecourts@scotcourts.gov.uk](mailto:supremecourts@scotcourts.gov.uk) within 24 hours.
- We will explain things helpfully in plain English and avoid using technical and legal jargon where possible.
- Our letters will always have the appropriate direct line telephone and fax numbers, correspondence address, DX and email address to assist customers who want to make further enquires.

*We will respond in a way that is suitable to your needs. Please tell us if you have a preference.*

## Service Delivery Targets (SDTs) and Customer Service Indicators (CSIs)

- To process summonses, petitions, and appeals within 1 working day of their receipt.
- To issue all extract decrees within 3 working days of the due date or date of request.
- To examine the process, productions and affidavits in undefended ordinary divorce cases for the judge within 5 working days of receipt of the minute for decree.
- To publicise our timescales for personal injury cases from the date of the first defences are lodged to the date of the first proof.
- To publicise our waiting period for civil appeals from the date of the interlocutor appointing the cause to the roll to the earliest date of hearing.

If you want to see if we are meeting these standards, you can view our monthly performance figures/report in our waiting area on the notice boards or contact the department to request details.

## **LISTENING TO THE CUSTOMER**

OCoS staff are committed to achieving the standards set out in this document. We will measure the success of our standards and, wherever possible, raise our standards through regular reviews, consulting those who have used our services.

## **Comments, suggestions and complaints**

### **COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS.**

We recognise that we will not get it right every time despite our best efforts. When we get it wrong, we want you to tell us about it so we can try to put things right for the next time. It is our policy to treat everyone fairly and sensitively. If, at any time, you feel that you have not been treated in this manner, please let us know. We want to make sure our standards are met and we welcome comments and suggestions for improving our service. The response to some suggestions may also be put into our quarterly newsletter 'The Proof'.

We appreciate your comments and suggestions about our services. When visiting our office you can fill in a customer comment /suggestion card and post it in the red post boxes situated around the department. If you would like a personal response, you should ask for a response to be sent and provide your details. We will report via our quarterly customer liaison meetings on all comments and suggestions made and what action, if any we have taken.

### **COMPLAINTS**

We also recognise that despite our best efforts customers may wish to make an informal or formal complaint about the administration of the OCoS, the conduct of staff or the facilities in the office. Our complaints leaflet sets out the service you can expect in respect of your complaint and how your complaint will be dealt with. A complaints leaflet can be obtained on request by post, fax or e-mail, on site from any of the public counters or on our web site at: [www.scotcourts.gov.uk](http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk)

Staff handling difficult complaints can receive assistance from more senior managers to ensure these complaints are successfully resolved.

If we receive a complaint in writing:

- We will acknowledge receipt within 2 working days. The comments box is checked once a week. This means that if you use the box to make a complaint, the acknowledgement will be sent within 2 working days of the date we read the complaint;
- If we cannot give a full reply at the outset, we will explain why and when you can expect a full reply;
- A senior member of the management team will send a personal written response within 10 working days if the complaint refers solely to the actions of staff. If others need to be consulted, a response will be sent within 20 working days;
- Where a complaint is upheld, we will apologise and give an assurance that any lesson learned from the complaint will be used to improve the standard of service in the future;
- We will review or discuss any decision that the customer is unhappy about;
- We will set up and regularly monitor a complaints/comments log;
- We will provide you with names and addresses of further bodies to whom you may complain in the event that you are unhappy with the way we have dealt with your complaint;
- We will ask you what you think of our complaints procedure through our regular customer satisfaction survey.

*All complaints will be taken seriously and dealt with impartially and in confidence.*

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**The Offices of the Court of Session  
Parliament House  
Parliament Square  
Edinburgh  
EH1 1RQ**

**DX 549306 Edinburgh 36**

**Tel: 0131 225 2595**

**Fax: 0131 240 6746**

**E-mail [supreme.courts@scotcourts.gov.uk](mailto:supreme.courts@scotcourts.gov.uk)**

**More information on the Offices of the Court of Session (OCoS ) and the work we do can be found on our website: [www.scotcourts.gov.uk](http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk)**