



County Limerick & North Cork Transport Group Limited (Trading as Rural Bus)

QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE
FOR CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS OF COMPANY SERVICE

MAIN INFORMATION CONTACT POINTS IN RURAL BUS

Unit 6a NCW Enterprise Centre
Sheehan's Road, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick
Tel: 069-78040
Fax: 069-78050
E-Mail: info@ruralbus.com
Website: www.ruralbus.com

COMPANY COMMITMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

WE WILL IMPLEMENT THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE

- TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY, AND IN THE SPIRIT OF IMPROVING SERVICE TO THE CUSTOMER.
- WE WILL EMBED THE PROCESS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE WITHIN THE BUSINESS AND PLANNING PROCESSES.
- WE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE, OF THE NEED TO CONTINUALLY REVIEW AND REASSESS THE NATURE AND FORMAT OF SERVICES PROVIDED, AND OF THE NEW CHALLENGES OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FACING US.
- WE WILL APPLY THE RESOURCES, TRAINING AND SUPPORTS NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE DELIVERY OF THESE OBJECTIVES.

QUALITY SERVICE STANDARDS

This statement outlines the nature and quality of service, which customers can expect, and will be made available at the point of service delivery.

This Customer Service Document sets out clearly the range of functions and activities in which the Company is involved.

- Providing transport to people in rural areas
- Providing a fully accessible transport service where required
- Providing training to our bus operators and staff
- Providing information on services

It also sets out the nature and quality of the manner in which we would hope to deliver these services – to the general public, specific business and other interest groups.

Our guiding principle is that all customers should have access to the same high quality of service. This means tailoring our service provision to the needs of our customer base and ensuring that the statutory rights to equal treatment of groups covered by The Equal Status Act 2000 are respected.

ON THIS DOCUMENT WE WILL:

- Ensure that the company remains up to date on, and informed by, best practice with the Equality Authority.
- Raise equality and diversity awareness levels in the company through training, information and communication
- Identify priority action areas, assess resource implications and make adequate provision to underwrite these actions.
- Optimise the use of electronic service delivery to help transcend physical and geographic barriers to access.
- Review progress in our annual report.

STANDARDS OF SERVICE

SERVICE BY TELEPHONE – WE WILL

- Answer phones promptly and ensure that staff identifies themselves in all telephone communications
- Supply you with up-to-date, accurate and comprehensive information in a courteous manner and ensure that it is easily understood by using simple, clear language
- Inform you if we need to transfer your call to a colleague, give you that person's name and number and ensure that your call is properly transferred
- Take details and call you back, if we cannot answer your query immediately
- Require staff to update their voicemail greetings if absent from the office
- Respond to all voice mail messages promptly, and, as a general rule, aim to respond by the following day at the latest
- Ensure that specific training, and refresher training, in telephone techniques is introduced for all front-line staff

- Use call queuing facilities where necessary, ensuring that your call is answered in sequence.

CORRESPONDENCE – WE WILL

- Use clear and simple language
- Ensure that all written correspondence carries a contact name and telephone number and, where applicable, a reference, to ensure ease of transaction
- Aim to provide a reply to written correspondence (including e-mail) within one week. Where a definitive response within this time frame is not possible, we will send an interim reply explaining the position. However, individual sections may set specific targets where appropriate, having regard to the nature of the work involved.

FORMS AND LEAFLETS – WE WILL

- Use simple and clear language
- Explain precisely what is required
- Ask only necessary questions
- Continue to examine the provision of forms and leaflets in electronic format.

VISITORS TO OUR OFFICES – WE WILL

- Provide clean, accessible public offices which ensure privacy, comply with occupational and safety standards and facilitate access for those with disabilities and specific needs
- Ensure that all front-line staff give their names
- Ensure that reception areas are properly staffed during opening hours
- treat all visitors in a polite and courteous manner
- Ensure that public signage is clear.

COMPANY WEBSITE – WE WILL

- Endeavour to develop and deliver web site to the highest possible standard
- Re-design the website with a view to improving signposting and ease of navigation
- Recognise that our customers have the right to access information in a manner which meets their specific needs.
- Monitor and evaluate our online service delivery to make continuous improvements and consult with clients to determine their online needs and preferences
- Endeavour to make official publications available, both in hard copy and in electronic format
- Reflect any changes by update contact telephone numbers and e-mail addresses on website

COMPLAINTS

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided. While the aim of the Company is to promote excellence from first to final points of contact in delivery of services, we understand that things will not always be perfect. Both management and staff of the Company are committed to providing a Quality Customer Service, and we value comments from customers, whether positive or negative, on the service provided.

TO THIS END, WE WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CUSTOMER FEEDBACK IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER:

- Through a designated customer comment link on our website, and
- Through the introduction of a formal complaints procedure, which will be available at all main contact points.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

- Simple instructions will be set down on how to make a complaint.
- Complaints will be dealt with promptly, efficiently and in a considerate manner.
- The procedure will be kept as simple as possible, each stage in the process will be clearly identified.
- Where possible, attempts to resolve the difficulties will be made at the first line of contact. Where a complaint cannot be resolved at this level the customer will be able to pursue the complaint.
- In the event of errors being made we will Endeavour to correct them as quickly as possible, and to give an explanation where possible, along with an apology.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

To deliver high quality services to you in an effective and caring manner.

COURTESY & CONSIDERATION

You are at all times entitled to be served:

- Promptly and in a courteous manner
- With due regard to privacy and confidentiality
- By helpful staff

OPENNESS & IMPARTIALITY

We undertake to:

- Deal with you in a fair and open manner
- Discuss any aspect of your dealings with us.
- Explain how a decision was reached

ACCESS

We endeavour to:

- Provide clean, accessible offices
- Facilitate access for people with disabilities and special needs.

REVIEW

Our services will be continually reviewed and improved upon where necessary.

YOU CAN HELP US TO HELP YOU

- By providing full and accurate information
- By letting us know when we do something well
- By making comments, complaints or suggestions about the services you receive.

Rural Bus have in place a Complaints Procedure for Customers dissatisfied with the quality of service received. A Copy of same can be obtained at our offices in Newcastle West or by e-mailing us at ***info@ruralbus.com***

FOREWORD BY MANAGER

As Manager, I am very conscious that the most successful businesses are those whose focus is on the delivery of excellent customer service. I firmly believe that any company that wishes to be successful in today's world should place the customer at its central core value.

I regard the delivery and provision of excellent customer service as one of the most important goals of Rural Bus. The company has tried to place an increasing emphasis on improving service to the customer, whether that being individual members of the public enquiring about services or existing service users seeking information.

The company has set challenging standards in this document, I am confident that we can meet these challenges.

Consultation and active engagement with our customers will be ongoing and I am hopeful that this engagement will enable us to make optimum use of our resources and enable us to be a more responsive, adaptable and customer-focused organisation.

The Document is a strategy for the Company and its staff to help meet the customer service challenges it faces in the coming years and build on the very substantial progress made to date.

Ms. Anne Gaughan
Manager of Rural Bus

RURAL BUS CODE OF CONDUCT

Rural Bus aims to provide a high quality of service, in a safe and secure environment. In order to achieve this, we would ask our customers to note that the following behaviour will not be accepted in any of our facilities. This Code of Conduct has been established for members of the public who use the facilities and services provided by Rural Bus.

Please note that the following behaviour is **NOT** acceptable:

- Behaviour which is disruptive and interferes with the use and enjoyment of the facility by others.
- Harassment of staff or members of the public by use of offensive or inappropriate language.
- Use of violence or threat of violence toward staff, sub contractors and/or members of the public.
- Malicious damage to and/or theft of Rural Bus property
- The use of alcohol and illicit drugs while using Rural Bus premises.
- Personal property being left unattended while using Rural Bus facilities.
- Smoking is prohibited within rural bus premises and the services it operates

Please help us to encourage the responsible and considerate use of Rural Bus facilities by observing the Code of Conduct.

Rural Bus is committed to delivering the best possible service to you in an effective and caring manner. Our Customer Charter outlines how we will deliver this service. This Charter states that at all times you are entitled to be dealt with in a courteous and considerate manner and with openness and impartiality. If you feel that the standard of service provided by Rural Bus has failed to meet these requirements, you may wish to make a complaint. You may do this by completing and submitting our Complaint Form *[on our website]*, by contacting our offices in Newcastle West or by e-mailing us at info@ruralbus.com

Complaints should not be anonymous and should be made on the appropriate form.

COMPLAINTS & APPEALS PROCEDURE

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly and not in accordance with the Customer Charter, you may wish to make a complaint. You can do so by asking for the Manager. Our staff will make every effort to resolve your complaint at this stage. If you are not satisfied you may make a formal complaint.

HOW DO I MAKE A FORMAL COMPLAINT?

You should address your complaint to the Chairperson. Complaints should be made in writing using the complaints forms and guidelines available at our offices and on our website. A complaint can also be made by fax or by e-mail. If a complaint is deemed valid it will be forwarded to the responsible person in the area to which the complaint refers.

WHEN CAN I EXPECT A RESPONSE?

All complaints will receive a reply. We will issue an acknowledgement within five working days and a full response no later than 28 days of receipt of complaint. You will be advised if there will be any deviation from this timescale and kept informed of progress.

WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM NOT SATISFIED WITH THE RESPONSE?

If you are dissatisfied with the response you can appeal to the Chairperson. An internal review will then be carried out and a final decision made within 4 working weeks.

The complaints and appeals system operated by Rural Bus does not preclude you from using external offices to deal with your complaint e.g. Office of the Ombudsman.

NOTE:

The complaints and appeal procedure should not interfere with your rights under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997.

COMPLAINTS - INTERNAL PROCEDURE

COMPLAINTS OFFICER: Ms Anne Gaughan

All formal complaints must be made on the appropriate Form and forwarded to the Manager who will be responsible for co-ordinating replies.

Where customers are unhappy with the decision an appeal can be made in writing to The Chairperson. An internal review will then be carried out and a final decision made.

It is intended to work within the following time limits:

- Acknowledgement within 5 working days
- Response within 28 Days of receipt of complaint
- Appeal within 4 working weeks

The above appeal procedure does not interfere with your rights under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997.

CUSTOMER ACTION PLAN

In their dealings with the public Rural Bus is committed to taking a number of significant steps over the next number of years to improve its services. Some of these will yield immediate improvements at certain points of contact such as improvements in information technology, improvements to offices and improved quality of the telephone service.

Rural Bus is committed to the following:-

QUALITY SERVICE STANDARDS:

Publish a Customer Charter that outlines the nature and quality of service which customers can expect, and display it prominently at the point of service delivery.

EQUALITY/DIVERSITY:

Ensure the rights to equal treatment established by equality legislation, and accommodate diversity, so as to contribute to equality for the groups covered by the equality legislation (under the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community).

Identify and work to eliminate barriers to access to services for people experiencing social exclusion, and for those facing geographic barriers to services.

PHYSICAL ACCESS:

Provide clean, accessible offices that ensure privacy, comply with occupational, health and safety standards and, as part of this, facilitate access for people with disabilities and others with special needs.

INFORMATION:

Take a proactive approach in providing information that is clear, timely and accurate, is available at all points of contact, and meets the requirements of people with specific needs. Ensure that the potential offered by Information Technology is fully availed of and that the information available on service websites follows the guidelines on web publication.

Continue the drive for simplification of rules, regulations, forms, information leaflets and procedures.

TIMELINESS & COURTESY:

Deliver quality services with courtesy, sensitivity and the minimum delay, fostering a climate of mutual respect between provider and customer.

Give contact names in all communications to ensure ease of ongoing transactions.

COMPLAINTS:

Maintain a well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of dealing with complaints about the quality of service provided.

APPEALS:

Similarly, maintain a formalised, well-publicised, accessible, transparent and simple-to-use system of appeal/review for customers who are dissatisfied with decisions in relation to services.

CONSULTATION & EVALUATION:

Provide a structured approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to the development, delivery and review of services. Ensure meaningful evaluation of service delivery.

CHOICE:

Provide a range of choices, where feasible, in service delivery. Use available and emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

BETTER CO-ORDINATION:

Foster a more coordinated and integrated approach to delivery of services.

INTERNAL CUSTOMER:

Ensure staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.

Rural bus is committed to the principles of Quality Customer Service and has introduced this Action Plan which sets out how we will implement these principles and achieve our service targets over the coming years. A customer service ethos will be promoted throughout the organisation and service users and staff will be encouraged to comment and improve upon existing practices.

CUSTOMER ACTION PLAN:

What you can expect from us?

Rural Bus is committed to delivering an efficient courteous and quality service to its service users. We will treat all our customers equally ensuring that there is no discrimination on any grounds. We will be sensitive to our customers needs and take into account their age, their capacity to understand often complex rules and procedures and any disabilities they may have.

When providing service by telephone we will aim to:

- Staff will be available to take your call from 9.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday.
- Be helpful and provide you with clear and accurate information.
- Always give you a contact name and telephone number.
- Respond properly and courteously.
- Take details and call you back if we cannot answer your query immediately.
- Indicate when you can expect to hear from us if we have to call you back.
- Provide an improved telephone system for our customers.
- Keep internal telephone directories up-to-date.

If you visit our offices we will aim to:

- Meet with you punctually if you have an appointment
- Respect your privacy.
- Deal with you in a polite, courteous and fair manner.
- Deal with your enquiry and provide any relevant information that we have as quickly as possible.
- Keep our offices clean and safe.
- Continue to improve accessibility for all our customers including people with a disability and special needs.

Note:

Due to work commitments it may be necessary to make an appointment in advance to meet with some members of staff.

In corresponding with you we will aim to:

- Use clear and simple language and keep the technical terms to a minimum.
- Include a contact name, telephone and extension number, e-mail address and reference number on all correspondence that we issue.
- Make arrangements to ensure that letters do not go unanswered when individual staff members are absent.
- Some correspondence requires considerable research before a full reply can issue and when this happens we will send you an interim reply explaining the position.
- Ensure that service departments are allocated an e-mail address.
- Ensure that all payments are made in accordance with provisions of the Prompt Payments Act, 1997.

In producing forms and leaflets we will aim to:

- Ensure that leaflets and forms are freely available, including in electronic format.
- Use clear and simple language.
- Explain exactly what information is required on application forms.
- Request only relevant information on application forms.

- Ensure that data supplied on forms will only be used for the purpose for which it is given.
- Produce all documentation in a range of accessible formats suitable to the needs of people with disabilities.

Complaints:

- If you are not happy with the quality of service we provide you are entitled to make a complaint to the section head of that service.
- If you are not satisfied with the response received, you should contact the Manager, in writing, who will respond to your complaint in writing within twenty eight days of receipt of complaint.
- You may also have a statutory right to complain to the Ombudsman whose role is to investigate complaints about administrative actions, delays or inaction adversely affecting persons or bodies that are dealing with Rural Bus
- All complaints will be dealt with properly, fairly and impartially.

Information and Communications Technology:

- New technology will be availed of to the greatest possible extent to make services more accessible and improve service delivery.
- Information technology systems within RURAL BUS including the telephone system will continue to be upgraded.

Staff:

- RURAL BUS will ensure that staff are recognised as internal customers and that they are properly supported and consulted with regard to service delivery issues.
- A comprehensive customer service-training programme for our support staff will be implemented.

Co-Ordination of Services:

Rural Bus will foster a more co-ordinated and integrated approach to delivering of services.

Choice:

Rural Bus will provide a range of choices, where feasible, in service delivery.

Rural Bus will use available emerging technologies to ensure maximum access and choice, and quality of delivery.

Consultation and Evaluation:

Rural Bus will provide a structural approach to meaningful consultation with, and participation by, the customer in relation to development, delivery and review of services.

Rural Bus will use the Strategic Policy Committees as one of the approaches to evaluating our service delivery.

Rural Bus will provide a comment sheet on our website [WWW.RURALBUS.COM] to facilitate customers who may wish to make suggestions or comments on the services which we provide.

Review of Customer Action Plan:

Rural Bus will review the customer action plan on a yearly basis and will take into account feedback from its customers and the strategic policy committees.

Rural Bus will meet on a regular basis. Monitoring the Customer Action Plan will be one of the key tasks within this groups remit.

Rural Bus Complaints Form

RURAL BUS are committed to providing an efficient and courteous service to all our customers.

If you are dissatisfied with the quality of service you received, please return this form to:
The manager, Rural Bus NCW Newcastle West, Sheehan's Rd, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick

or

E-mail to anne@ruralbus.com

Your complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the complaints and appeals procedure adopted by Rural Bus

[PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK PRINT]

Name:	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Email Address (Optional)	
PLEASE GIVE DETAILS OF YOUR COMPLAINT:	
Service:	
Date:	
Cause of Complaint:	

SIGNED: _____ **DATE:** _____

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Date Complaint Received: _____
Reference Number: _____
Date Decision Issued: _____
Appeal Decision: _____

Referred to/Date: _____
Date Acknowledged: _____
Appeal Received: _____