

Citizen's Charter

Fish Health Inspectorate

January 2011

What is a Citizen's Charter?

What this document is about

The main purpose of a Citizen's Charter is to improve access to an organisation's services and promote quality.

It does this by telling you, the customer, how to contact us, the standards of service you should expect and what to do if something goes wrong. It is also written in a clear and easily understandable way.

This document helps us too, by setting out clearly the services our team provides.

It will also help you get the most from our services, including how to make a complaint if you are dissatisfied with any aspect or have ideas for improvement.

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**Our code of
practice to
customers**

The Fish Health Inspectorate

Who we are

We are a specialist team based in the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas).

Cefas is an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

What we do

We are responsible, on behalf of Defra in England and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) in Wales, for fish and shellfish health matters.

Our main aim is to prevent the introduction and spread of serious fish and shellfish diseases.

We achieve this through risk based surveillance, monitoring, trade controls and responding to reported disease problems.

We provide advice on biosecurity, disease prevention and disease mitigation measures.

Contact information

Fish Health Inspectorate
Cefas,
Barrack Road,
The Nothe,
Weymouth,
Dorset,
DT4 8UB

Tel: 01305 20 67 00

Fax: 01305 20 66 02

Email: fhi@cefas.co.uk

Opening hours

Between 09:00-17:00pm
Monday to Friday.

Calls outside this time, when unanswered, go to a telephone answer machine.

**What
standards
can you
expect?**

Enquiries

Our priority is to provide an efficient and high quality service that is valued by customers and the public.

We are open to feedback and utilize this to improve our service. This document outlines the standards of service we aim to provide. These standards are regularly reviewed and updated.

Responses to enquiries

We aim to respond to all enquiries, including applications, whether received by post, fax or email within 15 working days unless specified otherwise.

If this is not possible, we will inform you of the reason why within 5 working days of receipt and indicate when you can expect a full reply

Telephone calls

We aim to respond to your telephone call promptly. Our staff will identify themselves by name and will be courteous, helpful and professional at all times.

If the first person you speak to cannot handle your request, they will transfer you to someone who can.

On transferring a call they will explain what is happening and give you the name of the person who will be dealing with your enquiry.

Where that person is not available, or where a message is left, we will ensure that someone calls you back within 24 hours.

Exports

We require a minimum of 5 working days notice to guarantee completion of the export paperwork, and if required the availability of a fish health inspector for a visual stock inspection.

EU Imports

We require a minimum of 1 day working notice of any import for live fish, shellfish and eggs into England and Wales.

After the import has been complete we require a signed copy of the health certificate within 5 working days.

Aquaculture production businesses (APB)

Authorisation

Following receipt of your fully completed application, we will send you an acknowledgement and provide you with guidance on creating a biosecurity measures plan.

A consultation process then begins, which can last up to 90 days, under the Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009. During this process we will visit your site and consult with other relevant government bodies.

After the consultation results are received we write to you with the outcome within 15 working days.

Importer authorisation

Following receipt of your fully completed application, we will send you an acknowledgement and, if required, provide you with guidance on creating a biosecurity measures plan.

Importer authorisations do not require completion of a consultation process, but may require a site visit. We aim to inspect your site within 20 working days

On receipt of a correctly completed application and, where required, a visit report, we will confirm authorisation in writing within 15 working days.

Notifiable diseases

We aim to respond immediately where a disease not already present in England and Wales is suspected. For all other notifiable diseases we will respond within 2 working days.

Mortalities

When informed of a fish or shellfish mortality, where we suspect a disease is present, we will respond within 2 working days.

Welfare

The FHI works closely with fish farming, ornamental trade and angling representative bodies to encourage best practice in fish welfare.

Appointments, visits and inspections

Booking your visit

When booking a routine appointment our inspectors will give at least 10 working days notice. We will endeavour to confirm the appointment in writing.

However, occasionally we are required to make visits at late notice or without prior appointment. In this case, we will inform you of the proposed date of visit at the earliest possible opportunity.

During your visit

On arrival, the inspector visiting you will give their name and inform you of the purpose of the visit.

We aim to arrive promptly for all pre-arranged appointments. If however this is not possible we will contact you to explain the delay and arrange a new appointment if appropriate.

On completion of a site visit we will provide a verbal summary of our conclusions, which will include what you can expect next.

After your visit

Following an inspection where no sample has been taken, we will provide a written summary report within 15 working days.

Where a sample has been taken, we will verbally report results where a notifiable disease has been found within 1 working day of receipt of the confirmatory test result. We will then confirm in writing within 5 working days.

If a notifiable disease is not found we will write to you within 15 working days of the diagnostic results being available.

In most cases sample testing can take at minimum of 10 working days.

Registration

Fishery and cropping water registration

Following receipt of your correctly completed application we will send you confirmation of registration, along with registration documents, within 25 working days.

For incomplete or incorrect applications we will attempt to contact you by telephone, in the first instance, and failing that in writing. We will work with you to complete the form by seeking clarification on any issues.

Site details changing

If the details of your registered site change - this could include the owners, species or facilities - you should notify us within 90 days.

Alien species

Non-native species

Your application

Following receipt of your fully completed documentation we will acknowledge your application to hold or release non-native fish and crayfish in writing within 15 working days.

Consultation period

Some applications are then sent out for consultation – a process which can take up to 40 working days.

Once all consultation comments are received we will inform you of the result in writing within 15 working days.

Retail

Retail licences require no consultation period and we will process your application within 15 working days.

Data storage and sharing

Openness and accessibility

Requests for information held by the FHI are dealt with on a case by case basis in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Data is collected for aquatic animal health control purposes. We may share your information with other government departments and agencies for this purpose.

However, at all times we will observe the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any personal information we hold about you will be treated in accordance to that legislation.

You are entitled to a copy of the information we hold about you and you have the right to rectify any inaccurate information that we may hold.

Offences and enforcement

Enforcement

We are responsible for investigating offences and enforcing the Aquatic Animal Health (England and Wales) Regulations 2009.

Our policy is to work with the industry to provide help, advice and encourage voluntary compliance with legislation.

However, the policy aims to deal more actively with persistent offenders or those committing serious offences. This includes the service of notices and prosecution where appropriate. Cefas' FHI enforcement policy can be found on www.efishbusiness.co.uk.

We also work with the Environment Agency, the police, UK Border Agency and other agencies in the UK and abroad to prevent illegal imports of live fish and shellfish entering the country. We encourage the public to provide us with information relating to such matters.

**Who do I
complain to?**

Complaints

A complaint is any written or spoken expression of grievance or dissatisfaction with the service provided, which requires a response. We take all complaints seriously. They will be dealt with promptly. By learning from complaints we take action to improve the service we provide.

First point of contact

In the first instance, please write to the Head of the Fish Health Inspectorate at Cefas.

It will help if you fully outline the facts of your case. Complaints will be investigated and responded to within 15 working days.

Our response will explain our findings and how we believe the complaint can be resolved.

Should it not be possible to meet this timescale, we will discuss the delay with you and provide a revised deadline.

Second point of contact

If you still feel the matter remains unresolved, please write to the Director of the Aquatic Health and Hygiene Division at Cefas.

The Director will investigate complaints regarding standards of service and report back to you within 15 working days.

If a response in this deadline is not possible, you will receive a letter explaining why and letting you know when a response can be expected.

Third point of contact

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome you can then write to a Member of Parliament and ask for your complaint to be passed to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

Alternately you can write to the Defra Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment.

**We welcome
your feedback**

Feedback

We always look for ways to improve our service and welcome your views regarding all aspects of our work and its delivery.

We regularly report on our performance against our stated standards and publish them annually, via our website www.efishbusiness.co.uk.

Feedback is a good source of information about how we are performing and we would be interested in any comments about your experience of our services.

Should you wish to comment on our performance, or about the performance of one of our team, please contact the Head of the FHI by letter, email, fax, in person or by telephone.