



# information sheet

## UKBA Customer Charter

28<sup>th</sup> May 2009

In April 2009, the UK Border Agency published its Customer Strategy for 2009-2012; and in May 2009 it published a Customer Charter. These documents can be found at:  
<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/aboutus/customer-strategy/>

This information sheet provides information about these two documents, particularly the Customer Charter.

### General caution on use of language

What the UK Border Agency means by a 'customer' is explained below. The use of this word, and others, in these two documents is not in line with the words' everyday usage. This is important because people who may not regard themselves as a customer may wrongly think that the standards set out in these documents do not apply in their cases. These standards should therefore be understood to have a wide meaning.

### General note

The Customer Strategy states that:

*"We value feedback, both positive and negative. Feedback helps us to improve the quality of our information, products and services."*

The various standards and commitments made in these documents, therefore, indicate some of the things (not all) about which it would be reasonable to provide feedback, and if necessary make a complaint, to the UK Border Agency.

### Who is a 'customer' of the UK Border Agency?

The Customer Strategy gives a list of people that the UK Border Agency regards as customers. The following broad definition is given in the Customer Charter:

*"We call anyone that uses the services of the UK Border Agency a customer."*

However, the Customer Strategy makes clear that the definition will include some people who might not regard themselves as using services – e.g. those whom the UK Border Agency are detaining or removing from the UK. The service standards (see below) would apply equally to these people. Generally, the word 'customer' is used by the UK Border Agency to mean anyone who has any sort of dealings or contact with it.

### Service standards

The Customer Charter sets out the following service standards:

A visitor to premises of the UK Border Agency should expect:

- To be in a safe and comfortable environment
- To be dealt with by staff in uniform or by staff who are dressed appropriately for their role
- If the visitor has an appointment, to be seen within a reasonable time

Someone who contacts the UK Border Agency by post or email should expect:

- For any reply to be in clear plain English

### **ILPA information service**

funded by JRCT  
[www.ilpa.org.uk/infoservice.html](http://www.ilpa.org.uk/infoservice.html)

### **Steve Symonds**

ILPA legal officer  
020 7490 1553  
steve.symonds@ilpa.org.uk

### **Immigration Law Practitioners' Association**

[www.ilpa.org.uk](http://www.ilpa.org.uk)  
T 020 7251 8383  
F 020 7251 8384

---

Information sheets provide general information only.

ILPA members listed in the directory at [www.ilpa.org.uk](http://www.ilpa.org.uk) provide legal advice on individual cases. ILPA does not.

---

- For any reply to be correctly addressed and accurate
- For the UK Border Agency to answer any question or respond to any comment the person has raised in his or her letter or email
- For a contact telephone number to be included with any reply

Someone who visits the UK Border Agency website (or a website of any of its business partners) should expect:

- For the information to be accurate and up-to-date
- To be able to contact the UK Border Agency by email via the website

Someone who calls a UK Border Agency call centre should expect:

- An explanation if he or she is put on hold or is to be transferred to another number
- Any comments he or she makes about the UK Border Agency's services to be passed on to the appropriate person
- To be treated politely and professionally
- To be provided with correct information

More general expectations that customers should have include:

- To be treated politely and professionally
- To be given accurate and relevant information in plain language
- That applications will be processed within published delivery standards (see below)
- To receive a detailed response to any enquiry or complaint
- To receive clear and detailed reasons for any refusal of an application; and an explanation of whether and how the decision can be appealed
- That personal details will be kept confidential
- To be given an opportunity to provide feedback or, if necessary, make a complaint to the UK Border Agency
- That any complaint is dealt with immediately or passed on to an appropriate person

### **Service Targets and Delivery Standards**

The Customer Charter sets out service and delivery targets. These apply to correspondence, complaints and applications made to the UK Border Agency. They set out what proportion of these should be responded to or resolved within what time period.

A weakness with these targets is that very few of them set a time period that will apply in 100% of cases. However, having regard to some of the general expectations set out in the Customer Charter (see above), it would be reasonable to expect that any failure to deal with something within the stated time period should be explained. If no explanation for delay is given, it would be reasonable to ask for one.

### **UK Border Agency's expectations of customers**

Appendix B to the Customer Strategy sets out things that the UK Border Agency expects from customers.

### **Complaints**

The Customer Strategy provides some general information about complaints. Further information is available in the "Complaints about UKBA" information sheet.