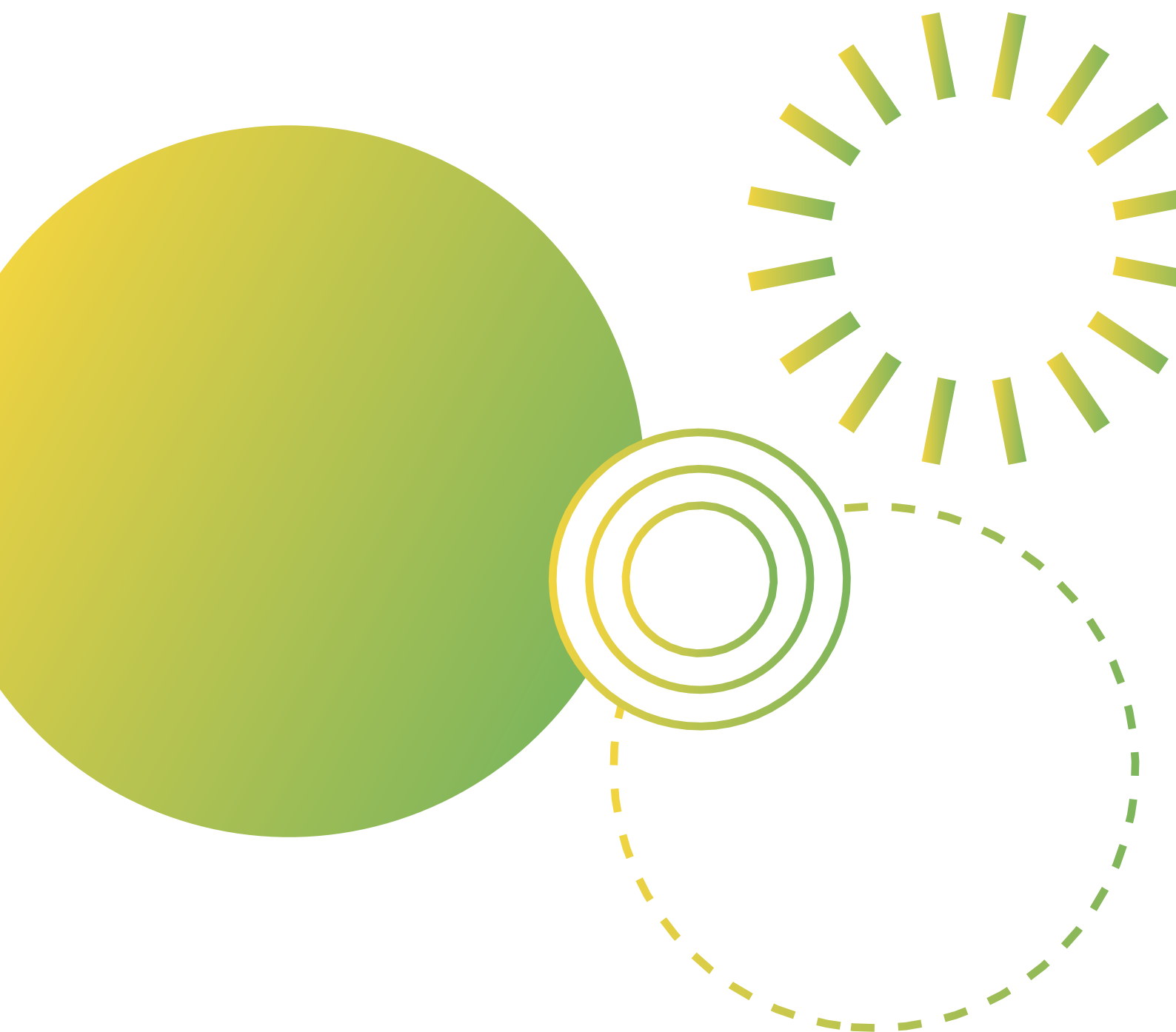
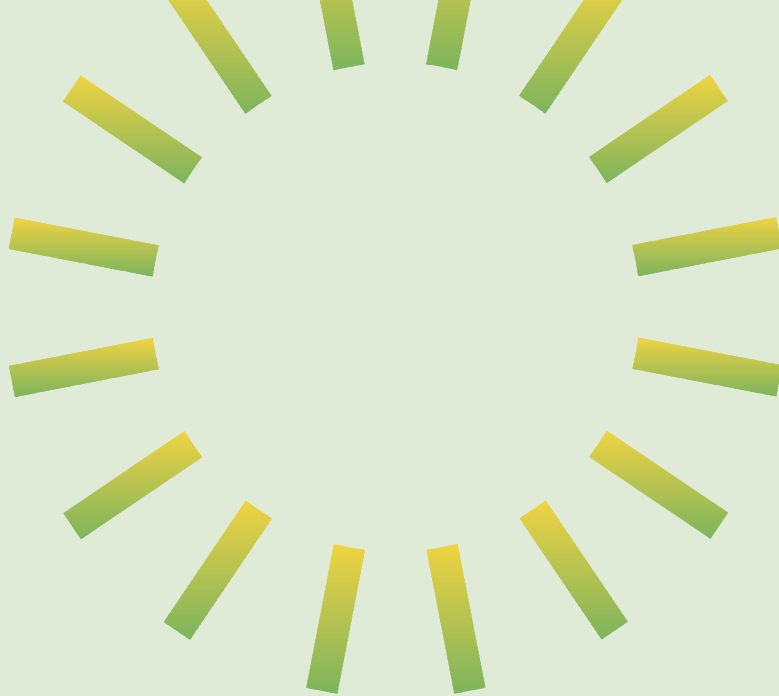


# Customer Charter 2021–2023





# Introduction

SOLAS is committed to delivering the highest standards of customer care. We work hard to improve our customer service.

## Who is our Customer?

Our customer may be someone who is, either directly or indirectly, the recipient of the services provided by SOLAS. It includes both internal and external customers/ stakeholders.

Should you contact SOLAS and your enquiry does not relate to services provided directly by SOLAS, you will be advised of same and every effort will be made to redirect your query to an organisation or individual who may be able to assist you.

## Our Commitment to You

We will deliver a professional, efficient and courteous service to each of our customers. We will treat all of our customers equally.

Our Customer Charter is a public statement which sets out the standards and level of service you can expect when dealing with SOLAS. It does not seek to cover all the functions and services we provide but outlines our commitment to you, and describes:

- The levels of service you can expect when you contact us;
- how you can help to improve our services;
- how to get more information from us;
- how to make a complaint; and
- how to contact our office.

# SOLAS ACTION PLAN 2021–2023

## Levels of service to expect when contacting or visiting SOLAS

### Email Contact

- All emails to central contact email addresses e.g. [info@solas.ie](mailto:info@solas.ie) requiring a response will be acknowledged within 1 working day of receipt.
- A full response will issue within 20 working days of receipt, or where this is not possible, we will contact you explaining the reason for the delay and advising when a response will issue.
- Should your enquiry relate to services not directly provided by SOLAS, you will be advised of same and every effort will be made to redirect your query to an organisation or individual who may be able to assist you.
- An automated email response will issue where staff are out of the office.
- We will include contact name, telephone number and email address in all email correspondence.

### Written Contact

We will deal with your enquiry as quickly as possible. We will be helpful and polite.

If another organisation needs to answer your query, we will let you know who to contact.

- All correspondence will be acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt.
- A full response to all correspondence will issue within 20 working days or, where this is not possible, we will contact you explaining the reason for the delay and telling you when a response will issue.

- Replies will be clear with simple language and as free from jargon and technical terms as is possible.
- We will include contact name, phone number and email address in all written correspondence.

## Telephone Contact

- Calls to the main switchboard will be answered promptly.
- All callers will be directed to the correct area or individual. If your query relates to an area not within SOLAS' remit or not directly delivered by SOLAS, every effort will be made to direct you to an organisation or individual who may help with your query.
- Any callers who need to be transferred to another area will be advised for the reasons for the transfer and the area or individual they are being transferred to.
- Voicemail messages will be updated regularly.
- Stored voicemail messages will be cleared regularly to avoid a full mailbox message to callers.

## Visiting SOLAS

- All visitors to SOLAS will be treated in a courteous and prompt manner.
- We will ensure that SOLAS' reception and meeting facilities are fully accessible for all our customers, and comply with Health and Safety regulations.
- COVID-19 Notice. All our services are available. If you have a query you can call us on 01 533 2500 or you can make a complaint through our website [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie). At present we cannot take personal callers to our office.

## Specific commitments regarding service levels

We recognise that different groups of customers will have different priorities when dealing with SOLAS and may require specific commitments regarding service levels.

### Customers with Disabilities

- We will ensure that the needs of people of disabilities are identified and fully catered for. We will make every effort to ensure that access to all areas of our building is maintained for people with disabilities and others with specific needs.

### Suppliers

- We will operate clear, impartial and transparent tendering and purchasing procedures in accordance with Public Procurement Guidelines.
- We will ensure that payments to suppliers are made in accordance with applicable Prompt Payments legislation and regulations.

## Service through Irish

- We will make every effort to accommodate customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish.
- We are committed to meeting our obligations under the Official Languages Act 2003.
- We will publish important documents such as our Corporate Plan and Annual Report simultaneously in Irish and English. We will also publish other information and material in Irish on our website [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie)

## Website/Publications

- SOLAS has a responsibility to provide information on its activities. We will maintain and develop our websites to ensure that they are accessible, informative and up to date.
- We will ensure that our publications are clear, address user needs and are available on our website.

## What we ask of you

In order to help staff to keep our commitments we ask that you:

- Treat staff in a courteous, civil and fair manner in all your dealings with us.
- Have patience with us at peak times when available staff are busy.
- Give us feedback by making comments or suggestions about the service you receive and letting us know when we do something well by emailing us at [info@solas.ie](mailto:info@solas.ie)
- Provide full, accurate and up to date information.

## Customer Complaints Procedure

SOLAS will respond to complaints in relation to services it delivers directly. Complaints in relation to the delivery of FET programmes should be raised with the programme provider in the first instance.

- If you are unhappy with the quality of service you receive from us, you have the right to make a complaint.
- Complaints should be referred to the Complaints Liaison Officer by email to [eunice.chapman@solas.ie](mailto:eunice.chapman@solas.ie)
- We will treat your complaint fairly and impartially.
- We will write to you and acknowledge your complaint within 5 working days.
- We aim to deal with all complaints within 28 working days of the letter of acknowledgement.

- When we receive your complaint, it will be forwarded to the appropriate person for attention.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, we will tell you about our review procedures. All reviews will be carried out by a more senior staff member.
- If you are still not happy after this review, we will tell you how to make a complaint to the Office of the Ombudsman.
- A full copy of our complaints procedure is available at [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie)

## The Role of the Ombudsman

If you feel that you have been unfairly treated by us, or if you are not satisfied with our decision on your complaint, you can contact the Office of the Ombudsman. By law, the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about our administrative actions or procedures, as well as delays or inaction in our dealings with you.

The Ombudsman's services are free, impartial and independent:

**Office of the Ombudsman**  
**18 Lower Leeson Street**  
**Dublin 2**  
**D02 HE97**

LoCall: 1890 22 30 30  
Phone: (01) 639 5600  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.ie)  
Web: [www.ombudsman.ie](http://www.ombudsman.ie)

## Freedom of Information

SOLAS complies fully with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2014. We will make every effort to provide you with as much information as possible informally, outside of the FOI Act. However, should you wish to make a formal request under the Act, you should email [foi@solas.ie](mailto:foi@solas.ie) or visit [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie).

## Data Protection-GDPR

The purpose of the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (the "GDPR") and other related regulations and delegated national legislation (such as the Data Protection Act 2018) (together "Data Protection Law") are to protect the privacy of individuals whose personal data is processed.

SOLAS is committed to ensuring the Lawful, Fair and Transparent processing of Data Subjects Personal Data through the use of appropriate technical and organisational measures. SOLAS will take all reasonable steps to secure and protect Data Subjects personal Data while complying with Data Protection Law. For further information please refer to [www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie)

## Statutory Obligations

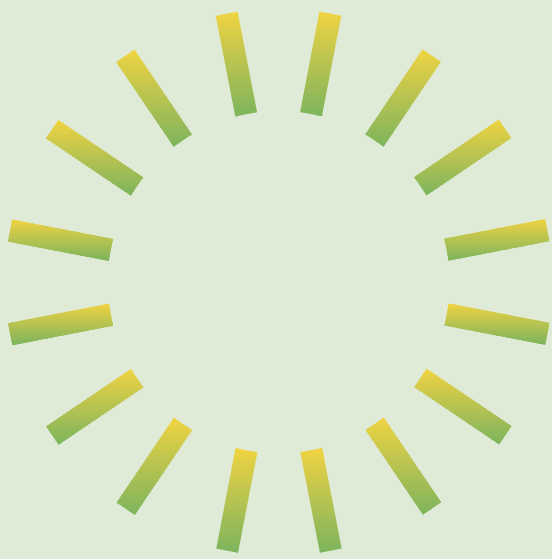
SOLAS is committed to fulfilling all of its relevant statutory obligations in relation to Data Protection, Equality, Freedom of Information, Prompt Payments of Accounts, Access to Information on the Environment and Safety, Health & Welfare at Work.

## How to contact us

The business hours of SOLAS are **Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.15pm and on Fridays from 9am to 4.45pm.**

<b>SOLAS Address</b>	Block 1 Castleforbes House Castleforbes Road Dublin 1 D01 A8N0
<b>Telephone</b>	+353 (01) 533 2500
<b>SOLAS email address</b>	info@solas.ie
<b>Freedom of Information</b>	+353 (01) 533 2392 foi@solas.ie
<b>Complaints Liaison</b>	+353 (01) 533 2394 Eunice.chapman@solas.ie







**SOLAS**

Further Education and Training Authority  
Block 1, Castleforbes House  
Castleforbes Road, Dublin 1  
D01 A8NO  
Ireland

T: +353 (0) 1 533 2500  
E: [info@solas.ie](mailto:info@solas.ie)  
[www.solas.ie](http://www.solas.ie)