

PeopleTalk



Citizen-Juries Shaping Government

Galway County Jury

Summary of Proposals

June 2015.

I - Public service phone numbers

Freephone basis.

Public service phone numbers are a vital link in the relationship of people and government. For those who need them most they can be very costly.

Inform after 20 Seconds:

- How many in the queue
 - Estimated waiting time
- Repeat every 15 seconds

When caller discontinues:

- Number recorded
- Call returned

When answering a call:

A public servant gives first name and surname

Normal business hours:

- 9am-5pm
- Lunch time
- Friday afternoons

Public information:

- For all public service numbers
- number of calls per given period
 - number answered and unanswered
 - average waiting period.

II - Data sharing and citizen's rights.

When a citizen applies for help...

From any state agency
(and pending the full implementation
of the Public Services Card system)

The official receiving the application...

...informs them of the right of access to personal
data under the Data Protection Acts and in
particular:

*You have a right to a copy of the personal information
which you are about to provide
and, if you apply to another agency for support,
a written copy of this information could be helpful.*

A written copy of the information.....

...should be offered to the citizen
at the end of the interview.

III – Centralisation with accessibility.

Seventeen local areas....

based on Galway County Council Local Area Plans, all need the service of state agencies.

Two options....

Where services have been centralised.

1 - local publicly accessible space

Rent for a few hours a week – minimal expense
(Community centres, libraries, resource centres, etc)
Less immediate access to all agency resources
A lot more accessibility for citizens in outlying areas.

2 - ensure public transport

In the absence local access
People on need public services often need public transport.
This should be planned, especially with the Rural Transport Scheme

Otherwise....

Centralisation serves the agency, not the citizen.

IV – Public Bodies and the Citizen.

Complex government... confused citizens.

One 'Customer' charter is enough...

And anyway, citizens are not customers.
(You can't 'buy' a public service.)
And public servants are not sales representatives.
(They, and not the 'customer,' have the final say.)

...and we already have it,

The Ombudsman's Guide
to best practise for public servants.

but with one serious defect.

It's not well enough known.
It should be in every home .

One big problem...

Implementing policies.
e.g. charters, data sharing.

...two untapped resources

First-line managers in state agencies.
Insider's understanding of how things work.
Dealing directly with citizens

Citizens on the ground,
Whom the policies are meant to serve.

Direct communication with citizens.

Inform as many as possible
as effectively as possible
To encourage responsible citizenship.
Email is not universal but is cheap and effective.