



# Plain Sailing

The Consumer Council

Your rights in instances of ferry service delays and cancellations



## Introduction

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Ferry travel provides an important service to passengers travelling to, from and within Northern Ireland.

The rights of ferry passengers are legally protected<sup>1</sup>. If your sailing is delayed or cancelled you are entitled to assistance and in certain cases compensation.

## Scope of Passenger Rights

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The rights explained in this guide apply to passengers travelling on passenger ferry services operating to, from or within European Union countries. However, the rights do not apply to passengers travelling on ships:

- Certified to carry up to and including 12 passengers;
- With a crew responsible for operating the ship of no more than three people;
- Where the distance of the service is less than 500 metres, one way; or
- On excursion and sightseeing tours.

These exceptions mean that the passenger rights outlined in this guide do not apply to some smaller ferry services. For more information contact the Consumer Council on 0800 121 6022 or [info@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@consumercouncil.org.uk)

## Information

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If your sailing is cancelled or delayed the ferry company is required to inform you as soon as possible, and no later than 30 minutes after the scheduled departure time. They are required to provide you with information concerning the new departure and arrival times as soon as it is available.

If you miss a connecting transport service due to a cancellation or delay, the ferry company is required to make reasonable efforts to inform you of alternative travel connections.

## Assistance

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If a service is expected to be cancelled or delayed for more than 90 minutes beyond its scheduled departure time, the ferry operator is required to provide you with free snacks, meals and refreshments where they are available or can reasonably be supplied. This assistance can be in the form of a voucher for refreshments / snacks from the facilities available.

Waiting time	Assistance
90 minutes or more and every 90 minutes after that	Light refreshment such as a bottle of water or a cup of tea
Four hours or more	A snack or light meal
Eight hours or more	A hot meal

You should also be offered a choice between:

- An alternative sailing at the earliest opportunity; or
- A full refund which must be paid within seven days.

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<sup>1</sup> (Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010)

## Accommodation

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If your sailing is cancelled or delayed and an overnight stay becomes necessary, the ferry company must provide accommodation free of charge where this is possible. Accommodation can be either on board the ferry or ashore and transport between the port terminal and place of accommodation must also be provided.

The ferry company is permitted to limit the total cost of accommodation ashore to €80 per passenger per night and accommodation is limited to three nights.

The €80 limit does not include the cost of transport to and from the place of accommodation.

**The ferry company is not required to provide accommodation if it proves the cancellation or delay is caused by weather conditions which endanger the safe operation of the vessel.**

## Compensation

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You are entitled to compensation equal to 25 per cent of the ticket price if you are delayed for at least:

- 1 hour for a journey scheduled to last up to four hours;
- 2 hours for a journey scheduled to last between four and eight hours;
- 3 hours for a journey scheduled to last between eight and 24 hours; or
- 6 hours for a journey scheduled to last more than 24 hours

If the delay exceeds double the times set out above, the compensation will be 50% of the ticket price.

If you are travelling on a return ticket the compensation will be calculated based on the price of the disrupted leg. If the price of the ticket is not broken down for the outbound and return legs, the compensation will be calculated based on half of the total ticket price.

The ferry company must pay the compensation within one month of your application for compensation. The compensation must be paid in money if you request this, otherwise the compensation may be paid in vouchers for future travel provided the conditions are flexible regarding the period of validity and the destination.

If the amount of compensation due is less than €6, the ferry company is not required to pay the compensation.

**The ferry company is not required to provide compensation if it proves the delay is caused by weather conditions which endanger the safe operation of the vessel or by extraordinary circumstances.**

Extraordinary circumstances could include, for example, natural disasters, strikes, search and rescue operations and decisions taken by traffic management bodies or port authorities.

Certain technical problems could also be considered extraordinary circumstances.

## Exemptions

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You are not entitled to rerouting or reimbursement, assistance, accommodation or compensation if you are travelling on an open ticket on which the time of departure is not specified, except for instances where you hold a travel pass or season ticket.

You are not entitled to assistance or compensation if you are informed of the cancellation or delay before the purchase of the ticket or if the cancellation or delay is caused as a result of your own actions.

## Complaints

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If you wish to make a complaint concerning a delay or cancellation you must submit the complaint to the ferry company within two months of the date you experienced the disruption. The ferry company must respond to you within one month of receiving your complaint to explain whether your complaint has been accepted, rejected or is still being considered. You should receive a final reply no later than two months from the date the ferry company received your complaint.

If you are unsatisfied with the response you receive contact the Consumer Council on 0800 121 6022 or [complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk). We have the power to investigate the complaint on your behalf.

The Consumer Council handles complaint's concerning ferry services operating to, from and within Northern Ireland. If you have a complaint about any other ferry service contact us and we will direct you to the organisation responsible for handling your complaint.

## Contact details

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### P&O

Tel: 08716 64 21 21  
Email: [customer.services@poferries.com](mailto:customer.services@poferries.com)  
Address: P&O Ferries  
Channel House, Channel View Road, Dover CT17 9TJ

### Port of Larne

Tel: 028 2887 2100  
Email: [info@portoflarne.co.uk](mailto:info@portoflarne.co.uk)  
Address: Port of Larne  
9 Olderfleet Road, Larne BT40 1AS

### Stena Line\*

Tel: 0844 847 0008  
Email: [feedback@stenaline.com](mailto:feedback@stenaline.com)  
Address: Customer Services, Stena Line  
Stena House, Station Approach, Holyhead LL65 1DQ

### Isle of Man Steam Packet Company\*

Tel: 01624 661661  
Email: [passenger.services@steam-packet.com](mailto:passenger.services@steam-packet.com)  
Address: Passenger Services  
Isle of Man Steam Packet Company Limited  
Imperial Buildings, Douglas, Isle of Man IM1 2BY

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\* If you wish to make a complaint about service received at the port or in the terminal when travelling with Stena Line or the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, contact the ferry company directly.



The Consumer Council

Elizabeth House  
116 Holywood Road  
Belfast  
BT4 1NY



Complaints line: 0800 121 6022



Tele/Textphone: 028 9067 2488



Fax: 028 9065 7701



Email: [info@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@consumercouncil.org.uk)  
[complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk](mailto:complaints@consumercouncil.org.uk)



Website: [www.consumercouncil.org.uk](http://www.consumercouncil.org.uk)



Consumer Council Northern Ireland



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