

Kaduna State Government



Service Charter Policy and Guidelines Office of the Head of Service

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Foreword by the Head of Service

A vibrant Public Service is instrumental for the successful implementation of Government policies and programmes. In its efforts to reposition and reinvigorate the Public Service, Kaduna State Government has been implementing a wide range of reforms aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its Public Service. Current moves to formulate service charter for the State's Public Service is in realization of the fact that such charters serve as instrument towards refocusing the public service as an effective vehicle for the implementation of developmental programmes.

A Service Charter, being a written commitment or social contract between an MDA (as a service provider) and the recipient of its services (as clients/customers), requires all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to strengthen the demand side of accountability by specifying standards and timeliness of service delivery. The objectives are to set quality standards, measure performance against them, and raise the standards of performance through feedback from clients. The implementation of service charter by MDAs will provide machinery for consultations with their respective clients; affords them the opportunity to measure and assess their performances; and increases the probability of enhancing the satisfaction of the public with services provided by Government.

The move to have a guideline for the formulation of service charter is quite apt in view of the need for all civil servants to appreciate the technicalities involved in the process of drawing such charters and strive to meet the challenges imposed on them by the document. The production of this manual is a practical guide on major issues involved in developing and reviewing service charters in the Kaduna State Public Service.

Government is therefore committed to providing the necessary support to all MDAs for the successful implementation of their service charters so that collectively the delivery of services for effective governance will be enhanced.

Nathaniel B. Hayab

Head of Service

Kaduna State

1. Introduction

1. 1.Preamble

This manual provides the policy stipulations and offers guidelines for the Ministries, Departments or Agencies (MDAs) of the Kaduna State on developing and implementing their service charters. The general idea of service charter is that the client is informed in advance about what kind of services can be expected, required and demanded from the MDAs.

1. 2.What is a service charter?

A service charter is a public document that sets out basic information on the services provided, the standards of service that clients can expect from an MDA, and how to make complaints or suggestions for improvement. Service charter programmes incorporate a range of quality assurance techniques including setting service standards, consultative mechanisms, information to clients, complaints and redress mechanisms, and quality awards.

In the Kaduna State public service, a service charter is broadly defined as a published statement endorsed by the government or the leadership of the public service containing:

- Details regarding an MDA's services
- Service delivery performance standards
- Rights and responsibilities of the clients, and
- Information relevant to the relationship between the clients and the MDA for service charter review and implementation.

1. 3.Why is Kaduna State Public Service preparing service charters?

The fundamental idea of a service charter is to set quality standards, measure performance against them, and raise the standards of performance through feedback from clients on the standards and actual quality levels. In order to keep up with clients' expectations, the Kaduna State public service seeks to pro-actively anticipate their needs and make changes in how agencies of government work in order to meet those needs. In this context, MDAs have to evaluate whether services are meeting their clients' needs through open feedback from the clients.

In this way, service charters will serve as a quality assurance strategy that offers a type of client guarantee in order to make MDAs more responsive to clients by consultation, and more accountable to government and the society through performance monitoring.

1. 4.Key Benefits of preparing and implementing service charters

The Kaduna State government realizes that there are many reasons and benefits for an MDA to prepare and implement a service charter. Such benefits are shown in Table 1.1.

1 Table 1.1: Key Benefits for Implementing Service Charters

S/N	Benefits
1.	Implementing service charters in MDAs helps bring about a cultural change towards better client orientation.
2.	Help public agencies to manage the expectations of service users.
3.	A service charter provides machinery for consultations with clients.
4.	Implementing service charters gives MDAs an incentive to measure and assess their performance.
5.	Implementing service charters puts pressure on MDAs to improve performance where promised standards have not been achieved.
6.	Implementing service charters, increases the probability of enhancing the satisfaction of the public with services provided by government.

2. Service charter policy

2.1 Any MDA in the Kaduna State public service should develop, implement, distribute and review a service charter in a manner whereby clients:

1. receive information about the services provided to them
2. participate in making decisions that are relevant to them
3. Clients are provided with opportunities to participate in service planning, development, and evaluation.

2.2 Service charters are linked with the performance management machinery of the Kaduna State Government. Therefore, the Executive Governor may set up machinery on agreeing performance contracts from MDAs, using the agency of the State Steering Committee on Reforms.

2.3 The leadership of the Kaduna State public service will authorize and support service charter initiatives in all key sectors.

2.4 The commitment of the leadership of the Kaduna State public service to implementation of service charters will be demonstrated through the following:

1. Service charters will be integrated into the reform agenda of the Kaduna State public service
2. Needed and extra resources to implement service improvement plans for approved service charters implemented by the MDAs will be provided in the annual budget estimates. Therefore, MDAs with approved service charter proposals are to include service charter implementation in their budget estimates.
3. Service charters will be integrated into the MDA performance monitoring mechanism in the Public Service Office.

4. Only service charters which specifically provide clients the opportunity to participate in service planning, development, delivery and evaluation will be endorsed. In this regard, the target clients or group of clients will not only receive information about the services provided to them but also participate in making decisions regarding the quality and standard of the services being provided.

2.5 Service charters are only valuable if they are used to bring about quality improvements. They are valuable to the extent that they help ensure that MDAs are sure that they achieve results which matter to their clients.

2.6 The Kaduna State public service wants to ensure quality service delivery in all sectors and service charters will be implemented progressively across key MDAs of the Kaduna State Government. The MDAs will prepare and implement service charters in accordance with the guidelines in this manual.

2.7 There are specific conditions for implementing service charters in the MDAs. The following are the necessary requirements and conditions which an MDA should meet before it is approved or endorsed for service charter implementation.

1. The Ministry or agency/department of Government must be clear about what it does, be clear about its service commitments or priorities, and the standard of service clients can expect on each commitment area.
2. There should be a list of individually identifiable products or/and services offered and clarity on the target client group (s) or representative clients.
3. Specific service standards or performance targets should be clearly set and the level of client service deriving from key performance targets/key performance indicators should be developed.
4. There should be specific teams of staff members responsible for different aspects of the service commitments specified in the service charter. The teams should be empowered to implement service improvement plans.

2.8 In order to facilitate the preparation or/and implementation of its service charter, an MDA should:

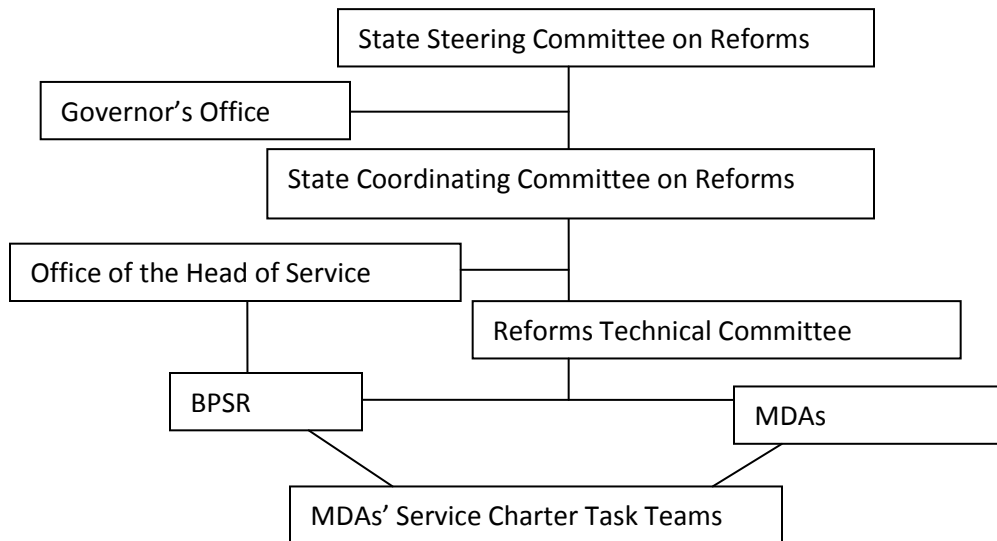
1. Build ownership of the service charter among staff members who are responsible for delivering the standards set out in the charters. These staff members should be adequately trained to deliver to the standards set in the service charter. This will involve staff members from different units and hierarchical levels in the MDA.
2. Have the capacity, or develop the machinery, for stakeholders' consultation on service planning; perhaps including stakeholders' forums, service surveys, and focus groups or using other consultation methods.
3. Have developed, or be developing, some basic performance information (e.g. performance targets, KPIs, or baseline data) in the service area addressed by the service charter.
4. Involve development partners operating in their sectors in the preparation, dissemination, monitoring and review of service charters.

3. Implementation structure for service charters in the Kaduna State Public Service

3.1 Service charter implementation in the Kaduna State public service should derive from the government leadership demanding performance from all MDAs and will involve the existing agencies or committees involved in public service reforms to drive the process in the MDAs.

3.2 Each Ministry, extra-ministerial department or Agency will establish a Service Charter Development and Implementation task team headed by the head of a core department delivering services to the public.

3.3 The following structure is proposed for implementing service charters in the Kaduna State public service:



3.4 Under the State Coordinating Committee on Reforms, the Reforms Technical Committee will work with the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) to facilitate the preparation, implementation and monitoring of Service Charters in the MDAs.

3.5 Through the BPSR, the Office of the Head of Service will demand a periodic report on the implementation of Service Charters from the MDAs as part of the MDA performance management role of its Performance Management department.

3.4 Oversight for feedback and complaints beyond the level of the MDA will reside in the State Coordinating Committee on Reforms, albeit, as occasion demands, in consultation with the State Steering Committee on Reforms.

3.5 MDAs should prepare, and review their charter at regular intervals specified below, and submit the prepared/reviewed charter to the Office of the Head of Service which will further review it through input of the BPSR before it goes to the State Coordinating Committee on Reforms for approval:

1. Public-facing MDAs covering similar sectors and which jointly operate one service charter for their sector should review their service charter every three years

2. Other MDAs and non-public-facing MDAs (i.e. MDAs which service the Kaduna state public service) should review their service charters every other year.

4. Service Charter Guideline

4.1. Focus

This manual is a practical guide on the major issues developing and reviewing service charters in the Kaduna State public service.

4.2. Preparation and implementation of service charters by MDAs

4.2.1. Service charter management

Public-facing MDAs covering similar sectors may jointly prepare one comprehensive but well-focused service charter for their sector. Such service charter should clearly specify what services and levels of services are provided specific client groups within the sector. This kind of joint service sector would necessarily involve a higher level of participation by key stakeholders including civil societies and representative client groups. Evidence of the consultation and input got during the engagements with the civil societies and client groups and relevant development partners should be provided to the BPSR and kept by the collaborating MDAs.

All clients should be made aware of your client service charter and their opportunities for choice and participation. This is to be done at the earliest appropriate moment of their contact with your service. Your client charter is written for your clients in a language and format that can be easily understood by the clients or groups of clients. Clients will ideally be involved in its development and review. Therefore, decide at the onset which particular staff members, clients and external people and organisations will provide input to the preparation of your service charter. Furthermore, decide how and when the service charter will be brought to the attention of clients.

The effective use of service charters requires the commitment of senior public servants and staff after the publication of the charters. Furthermore, as service charters link to MDAs' performance management, emphasis should be placed on monitoring the degree of compliance with the commitments that are undertaken in each service charter. This may include, in some cases, undertaking a systematic and periodic survey of the opinions and satisfaction levels of the clients. This should help identify what improvements in services are needed for better or higher quality service delivery and what is to be done regarding implementing updated service charters.

It is important to state and prepare for the support you will provide clients to enable them to make choices and participate, including the use of interpreters, advocates, written materials in a variety of community languages, and culturally appropriate service strategies

MDAs should be aware that once their charter has been launched, they have to maintain the set standards and continuously seek to improve them, particularly by acting on the feedback they receive from their clients. For this reason service charters have to be updated regularly to retain their validity.

4.2.2. The role of the MDA service charter task teams

Each MDA should create a 'Service Charter Task Team' reporting to the Permanent Secretary or Chief Executive and which is integrated with the performance management of the MDA. The service charter task team will include at least one staff member in a specific service area or set of service areas targeted by the service charter. The Service Charter Task Team will consult widely with stakeholders on all key service items (e.g. service targets, service measures and service levels) and agree ownership of them with all service owners, i.e. staff members offering the services. The general guideline on the terms of reference of the 'Service Charter Task Team' is contained in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Guideline on Core Activities of an MDA Service Charter Task Team

S/N	Activity
1.	Facilitate the clarification/re-focusing of the MDA core mandates in line with the reviewed MDAs' Mandates manual/compendium
2.	Facilitate the development of the MDA's mission and core values statements, where none is inexistent with the collaboration of Bureau of Establishments, Management Services and Training (BEMST)
3.	Facilitate the identification of key services, service standards, service levels/performance targets, key clients or groups of clients, key stakeholders and key partners
4.	Hold consultations with the staff, clients, development partners, and other relevant stakeholders (including civil societies)
5.	Develop the service standards and performance targets in consultation with service owners, i.e. staff members directly providing the services, with input received from target client groups, development partners and other relevant stakeholders
6.	Develop the approaches for service charter implementation in the MDA in consultation with service owners, i.e. staff members directly providing the services
7.	Prepare a draft of the MDA service charter for consultation with staff members, representative clients, development partners, and some relevant stakeholders in accordance with the format in this manual.
8.	Present the draft service charter to the Permanent Secretary or the Chief Executive as appropriate for submission to the BPSR.
9.	Facilitate the production of the approved service charter and its communication to staff members, clients and partners and other relevant stakeholders
10.	Regularly liaise with the Permanent Secretary or the Chief Executive on addressing clients' concerns and in reviewing the progress of service charter implementation in the MDA, and represent the MDA in service charter forums.
11.	Facilitate the review of the MDA Service Charter in line with the provisions of this guideline

4.2.3. Typical content of a service charter

There are no strict formats for drafting a service charter, however, an MDA's service charter would normally include:

1. Brief information on your MDA: name, purpose/mission statement, core values and client base.
2. The rights and responsibilities/obligations of your clients: remember that rights are normally set in law while obligations or responsibilities are what you require of your clients to be able to give them the service you guarantee in your charter.
3. Your key services: outline the services you offer but try to keep this as short, simple and specific as possible.

4. Your standards of service: these performance targets may be a separate section or included under the section of your key services.
5. How clients/stakeholders can give feedback, suggestions or lodge complaints: include information on how clients can give feedback or lodge complaints and state how your MDA will put things right when it is at fault.
6. Information on how your clients can reach you – your address, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.
7. Additional information e.g. when the next review of service charter will be done and on contacting the BPSR where the clients feel they need to do so.

4.2.4. Guideline on possible areas to set service standards and levels

The standards of service will depend on the nature of the services/product of MDAs and should be specific to the target clients or groups of clients. Here are examples of areas on which service standards can be set and MDAs may pick the ones relevant to them or develop the most appropriate ones by themselves where relevant. For each item of service standard, a service level, target/goal or performance indicator should be set.

1. Quality of service/product
2. Speed of service/Timeliness
3. Client care
4. Accountability
5. Use of technology
6. Fairness
7. Privacy
8. Accessibility
9. Reliability
10. Responsiveness
11. Transparency
12. Information
13. Help/Support
14. Confidentiality

4.2.5. Key questions for reviewing service charters

Here are key questions to address in reviewing your service charter for effectiveness.

1. Is the service charter being implemented?
2. Are procedures being followed?
3. Are service standards being upheld by service owners?
4. Are specific performance measures targeted and measured?
5. Is the service performance up to the standard set?
6. Have particular client-groups had difficulty with any aspect of the service charter?
7. Are the concerns of clients being resolved?
8. What has changed that may prompt a change to the service charter?
9. How does the service charter compare with that of similar organisations?

4.3. Service charter review guideline in the Kaduna State Public Service

The BPSR, as the driving agency for service charter implementation in the Kaduna State public service, will be interested in the process used by the MDAs for reviewing their service charters. In particular, for the BPSR to recommend approval of any service charter the following criteria must be met.

1. Compliance with review time frame

The MDA should undertake the review process at regular intervals and within the required time frame.

2. Accuracy

The service charter should comply with the service charter policy and guideline, and should address specific service targets or concerns of client groups.

3. Consultation

The MDA should show proof that it has engaged with clients or client groups and /or their representatives in the development and/or review process. The results of such engagements should be submitted to the BPSR within two weeks.

4. Simplicity

The service charter document should be prepared in simple language that is easily understood by clients.

5. Concerns

The service charter should clearly state how the MDA will address clients' concerns should they be dissatisfied with the MDA's service (s).

Further Information and Support:

Should you require further information and assistance or wants to provide input to this service charter policy and guideline, please contact the Permanent Secretary, Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR).

Appendix 1 Physical Address

Kaduna State Bureau of Public Service Reforms,
No. 8, Wurno Road,
Off Rabah Road, Badarawa,
Kaduna.

Phone number: +234 803 5985 067; +234 638 33783

Email Address: bpsr.kaduna@gmail.com

Appendix 2: Basic Service Charter Checklist

The service charter should be:

1. clear about what your MDA does: its mission and core values
2. specific about the standard of service clients can expect (e.g. key performance indicators and level of service attached to each indicator)
3. clear about basic client rights and responsibilities
4. specific about options for providing feedback and making a complaint
5. specific on information about how to contact you,
6. easily understood and accessible to target client-groups or the general community (including relevant civil society organisations)
7. dated for when it was approved
8. dated for when it was last reviewed
9. Specific about when the next review of the service charter will be done.