



Access to Communities and Local Government Information

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet explains how you can get access to information that we hold at Communities and Local Government.

PUBLISHED INFORMATION

We publish information in the following ways, all of which you can have access to.

- The *publication scheme* lists the published information, by categories, available from us, our agencies and regional offices. This scheme tells you how to get documents and whether there is a charge.
- The *publications database* contains details of our publications issued since May 2002. You can browse or search for particular publications, see what's new and send us your comments. It tells you how to ask for free publications and how to order (and pay for) priced publications.
- *Recently released information* such as latest announcements, publications and press releases.
- The *information asset register (IAR)* lists unpublished information that we hold and that is available for access if you ask.

You can find the publication scheme, publications database, IAR and recently released information on our website at www.communities.gov.uk

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

If information has not been published yet, or will not be published, you can still ask for it under the following access guidelines.

Freedom of Information Act 2000. Apart from certain exemptions, the Act gives a general right of access to information that we hold.

Environmental Information Regulations 2004. These regulations give you a right of access to environmental information that we hold, including information about air, water, land, natural sites, plants and wildlife.

Data Protection Act 1998. The Act gives you the right to ask for access to ‘personal data’ that is held about you.

HOW WE WILL HANDLE YOUR REQUEST

Freedom of Information Act. Whenever possible, we will reply to your request within 20 working days of receiving it. In some circumstances, it may take us longer to provide the information.

If this is the case, we will write to tell you when you can expect a reply. We may also ask you for a fee if we need to charge you for the information. If we cannot provide the information, we will write to explain why we cannot give you the information. One reason could be that we do not hold the relevant information or that it is ‘exempt from release’ (in other words, we cannot give you the information by law).

Environmental Information Regulations. We will handle any requests made under these regulations in the same way as requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. With complicated requests, however, it may take us up to 40 working days to send all the information to you.

Data Protection Act. We will search all the relevant records that we hold to find any ‘personal data’ we hold about you. We will send the information we hold within 40 days of receiving your request.

HOW TO MAKE A REQUEST

- *Freedom of Information Act.* You must make your request in writing to the relevant business area. If you don’t know which area that is, you can write to our Enquiry Services:

Communities and Local Government
Enquiry Services
Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6DE
(Telephone: 020 7944 4400)

You can also send your written requests to the relevant business area e-mail account (see our Website for a list of e-mail accounts).

If you can't find the relevant e-mail address, you can e-mail Enquiry Services E-mail: xxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxx.uk

- *Environmental Information Regulations.* You can make requests in the same way as Freedom of Information Act requests, or over the phone.
- *Data Protection Act.* You should send your requests for 'personal data' that we hold about you to the Data Protection Officer. You need to send a cheque for £10 (payable to Communities and Local Government) and two forms of identification (such as a copy of your birth certificate, passport, driving licence or household utility bill) with each request you make.

You must make your requests in writing to:

Communities and Local Government
Data Protection Officer
Zone 2/F29, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6DE
(Telephone: 020 7944 6023)

We have a visitor centre at Ashdown House in Victoria Street where you can look at the available information. You will need to make an appointment before you can inspect information at the visitor centre.

Department for Communities and Local Government
Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6DE

COMPLAINTS AND REVIEWS

We have an internal complaints and reviews procedure. If you want to make a complaint about the way we have handled your request, or if you want to request an Internal Review against our decision not to release information, you can contact our Enquiry Services. If you are still not satisfied after we have considered your complaint or review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner for a final decision by writing to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700 (switchboard)
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: xxxx@xxx.xxx.xxv.uk

WEB SITE ADDRESSES

Communities and Local Government: www.communities.gov.uk
Department for Constitutional Affairs: www.dca.gov.uk
Information Commissioner: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

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