

The Freedom of Information Act 2000

FOI Fact Sheet

Note: This leaflet gives an overview of some of the main provisions of the Act and should not be regarded as a legal interpretation.

1. What is the Freedom of Information Act? The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 was fully implemented on 1st January 2005, giving you the right to request information from public authorities. This allows you to access information about how the Department works, spends public money, reaches decisions, etc.

2. Information may also be obtained under:

- **The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)** - this allows you access to information held *about you* by both public and private organisations, and gives you the right to make sure it is correct.
- **The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs)** - This legislation gives you access to any environmental information held by organisations that perform public functions.

3. How do I get information about DETI under the FOI Act? You can find information on the Department's website [<http://www.detini.gov.uk>]. If you can't see what you're looking for you can email <mailto:foi@detini.gov.uk>, or write to:

Information Management Unit
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Netherleigh Massey Avenue
Belfast BT4 2JP

Please state your name, address, telephone number and specific details of the information you require.

4. How long does it take to get information? Once a written request for information is received, we will respond promptly, and at any rate, within 20 working days. In certain circumstances a final response may be made outside this period where additional time is needed to determine whether or not disclosure would be in the public interest.

5. Is there a cost? This depends on a number of factors including the volume and complexity of material requested. Responses to enquiries that cost the department less than £600 to processⁱ will be provided free of charge, although there may be a small charge for disbursementsⁱⁱ. The Department has a right to refuse a request if the cost of locating and retrieving the information exceed £600. We will not refuse a request for environmental information on the grounds of cost alone; however we have the right to charge a reasonable amount to cover processing costs. In all cases, we will notify you of any estimated costs before proceeding with the request.

6. What happens if the information I want is not available? The Department cannot provide information that does not exist, but we have a duty to assist you. We will contact you with what relevant information we do hold, or may offer to transfer your request to another public authority that might help.

7. Can I have any information at all? The FOI Act allows you access to almost all information that a public body holds. But some information cannot be revealed to the public, like information about national security, law enforcement or personal information about others.

8. What if I am refused information? We will tell you if information is being withheld and why. If you are unhappy with how we have handled your request you have the right to request an internal review. This request should be made in writing *within 40 working days* to:

Information Management Unit
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast
BT4 2JP

Or by email to: xxx@xxxxxxx.xxx.xx

We will reply to you within 20 working days. If you are not satisfied with the result of the internal review you may appeal to the Information Commissioner (details below). The Commissioner will normally expect an internal review to have been carried out prior to appeal.

9. How do I find out more? More information is available from office of the Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk
Phone: 01625 545 700
Email: ico.gsi.gov.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF
Fax 01625 524 510

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ⁱ Includes the cost of finding, sorting or editing the material

ⁱⁱ Disbursements may include costs of photocopying, printing, postage etc