

Can I appeal against the decision?

You have rights of review and appeal against our decisions to withhold information; about the amount of fees we have decided to charge; or if you are generally dissatisfied with the way we have handled your request.

These rights consist of two review processes. First, you should use our internal complaints procedure – contact the Corporate Improvement Manager. Next, if you are still dissatisfied, you can appeal directly to the Office of the Information Commissioner by phoning (01625) 545745 or writing to:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Note: The Commissioner will expect you to have completed our internal complaints procedure before making an appeal.

Where do I send my request?

Contact:

Corporate Improvement Manager
Mossley Mill
Newtownabbey
BT36 5QA

Telephone: (028) 9034 0038
Fax: (028) 9034 0127
Textphone: (028) 9034 0109
E mail: info@newtownabbey.gov.uk
Website: www.newtownabbey.gov.uk



Freedom of Information Act 2000



Publicity and Access Procedures

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 was passed on 30 November 2000. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, with certain exemptions.

One of the responsibilities under the Act for all public authorities is to produce and maintain a publication scheme which allows easy access to information not routinely available from other sources. The publication scheme must set out the types of information the authority publishes, the format(s) in which it is available and details of any charges for access to it. Newtownabbey Borough Council's publication scheme is available from the Corporate Improvement Manager at Mossley Mill or on the Council website.

All public authorities must deal with individual requests from 1 January 2005, when the general right of access to information held by public authorities came into force. Anyone may make a written request for information.

What information can I request?

You can ask to see or have copies of any information we hold, unless it is covered by an exemption.

There are two kinds of exemption under the Act: **absolute exemption** and **non-absolute exemption**. If we claim an exemption, we must inform you within 20 working days which exemption we are claiming and why it applies.

If the information you request is covered by an **absolute exemption**, we do not have to state whether or not we hold the information in question, nor consider disclosing it in the public interest.

If the information you request is covered by a **non-absolute exemption**, we have to consider the public interest in confirming or denying that the information exists and in disclosing information. We may disclose information, even if an exemption applies, if the public interest in disclosure outweighs the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

How do I make a request for information?

You should apply to us in writing by letter or email. You can find details of where to send your request on the back page of this leaflet. Please describe in detail the information you want, and give your name, address, telephone number and (if appropriate) email address.

When will I receive the information?

We will respond to requests promptly and aim to meet the deadline of within 20 working days. If we make a charge, or if we need more information from you to help us deal with your request, we may take longer than usual. If information is covered by an exemption, and we have to consider the public interest in releasing it, we will try to provide the information, wherever possible, within 20 working days. We will let you know if there will be a delay in providing the information.

When will there be a charge?

We believe strongly in openness, so we will try to keep the cost of information as low as possible. There is no charge for making a request, but in some cases we may charge a fee for letting you see the records or providing the information. However, if a charge is necessary, the cost will be in line with the published list of fees, available from the Corporate Improvement Manager or on the website. We will tell you of any charges when you make your request.