



Information Commissioner's Office
Promoting public access to official information
and protecting your personal information

Press Release

For immediate release

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ICO promotes your right to know

To mark the fifth international Your Right to Know Day (Friday 28 September), the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is calling on public authorities to adopt a transparent approach to releasing information through proactive disclosure. The call comes as the ICO prepares to launch its new approach to freedom of information publication schemes, improving the dissemination of public information.

Over the past year the ICO has been collecting feedback from a cross-section of those who use or work with publication schemes, from freedom of information practitioners to members of the public. A series of sector-specific workshops held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland were attended by representatives from central and local government, police, health and education.

The results of the research have been collated and used to develop proposals for the revised ICO policy on proactive disclosure through publication schemes. The policy will outline the three elements necessary for public disclosure;

- A model publication scheme, developed and approved by the ICO.
The model can be adopted wholesale and provides a simple means by which public authorities can proactively disclose information.
- A document which will give sector-specific guidance on the type of information that should be proactively disclosed.
- A guide to information routinely made available by the public authority.
This will be created by the public authority and will act as a guide to the

content of the publication scheme. This section does not require approval by the ICO.

Dawn Monaghan, senior manager with responsibility for good practice in freedom of information at the ICO, said: "Our aim is to improve and enhance publication schemes in order to engender a real culture of proactive disclosure across all areas of the public sector. Only through openness and transparency can a public authority truly gain the trust of the public. We have worked closely with public authorities to canvas opinions on publication schemes, and these have informed the development of our new policy."

The new policy will be released for public consultation shortly.

ENDS

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: www.ico.gov.uk

Notes to Editors

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. Since the introduction of the Act two years ago the Information Commissioner's Office has closed over 4,500 cases and issued almost 600 decision notices.
3. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk
4. According to the ICO's 2006 annual track research 76% of the public questioned by the ICO believe the Freedom of Information Act increases knowledge of what public authorities do; 74% believe the Act promotes accountability and transparency in public authorities and 72% think the Act increases confidence in public authorities.
5. Many high profile disclosures under the Freedom of Information Act have influenced public debate, these include:
 - Hospital car parking charges
 - University admissions policies
 - E-voting systems
 - ID cards
 - Tax and pensions
 - Funding of academy schools
 - Airport expansion

6. Examples of cases where the ICO has ordered disclosure include:
 - restaurant inspections
 - airport contract for Ryanair
 - DWP study into ID cards
 - Gateway Reviews for ID cards
 - MPs' travel expenses