

11. How can I use the information I receive?

The Freedom of Information Act does not place restrictions on how the information supplied under it may be used. However, the Act does not transfer copyright of any information supplied under it.

12. What happens if the Board does not understand my request?

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the Policing Board has a duty to advise and assist you. If staff do not understand your request, you will be contacted to clarify what it is that you want. It would be of assistance to the Board if your request for information contained a contact telephone number.

13. What happens if my request is refused?

The Policing Board may refuse to provide information if that information falls under one of the exemptions that are outlined in the Freedom of Information Act. If your request is refused, the reply from the Policing Board will let you know the exemption applied and give you details of how to complain against the decision.

14. What happens if the Board does not hold the information I seek?

If you make a request and the Policing Board does not hold the information or part of the information you have asked for, you will be advised of this.

If the Board is aware that another public authority holds the information, a transfer of your request can be made. You will also be advised of this.

Alternatively, you may be advised to re-apply to the other public authority which the Board believes holds the information. In these circumstances, the Board will provide contact details for that authority.

15. Can I make a complaint if I am not content with the response?

The Policing Board has in place a complaints procedure that allows you to complain for the following reasons:

- If you feel that the Board is not complying with its Publication Scheme, or
- If you consider that your request for information has not been handled properly or are otherwise dissatisfied with the outcome of the Board's decision.

In the first instance we would hope to deal with the your complaint informally, but if we are unable to resolve the issue you may make a complaint, in writing, to the Board's:

Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Policing Board
FOI Complaints
James House, Block D
2 – 4 Cromac Avenue
The Gasworks, Belfast, BT7 2JA

Full details of the Board's FOI complaints procedure can be requested in writing, or alternatively is available on www.nipolicingboard.org.uk

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you also have the right to complain directly to the Information Commissioner at the address below:

Information Commissioner's Office
FOI Compliance Team (Complaints)
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
WILMSLOW
Cheshire SK9 5AF
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk



Published by
Northern Ireland Policing Board

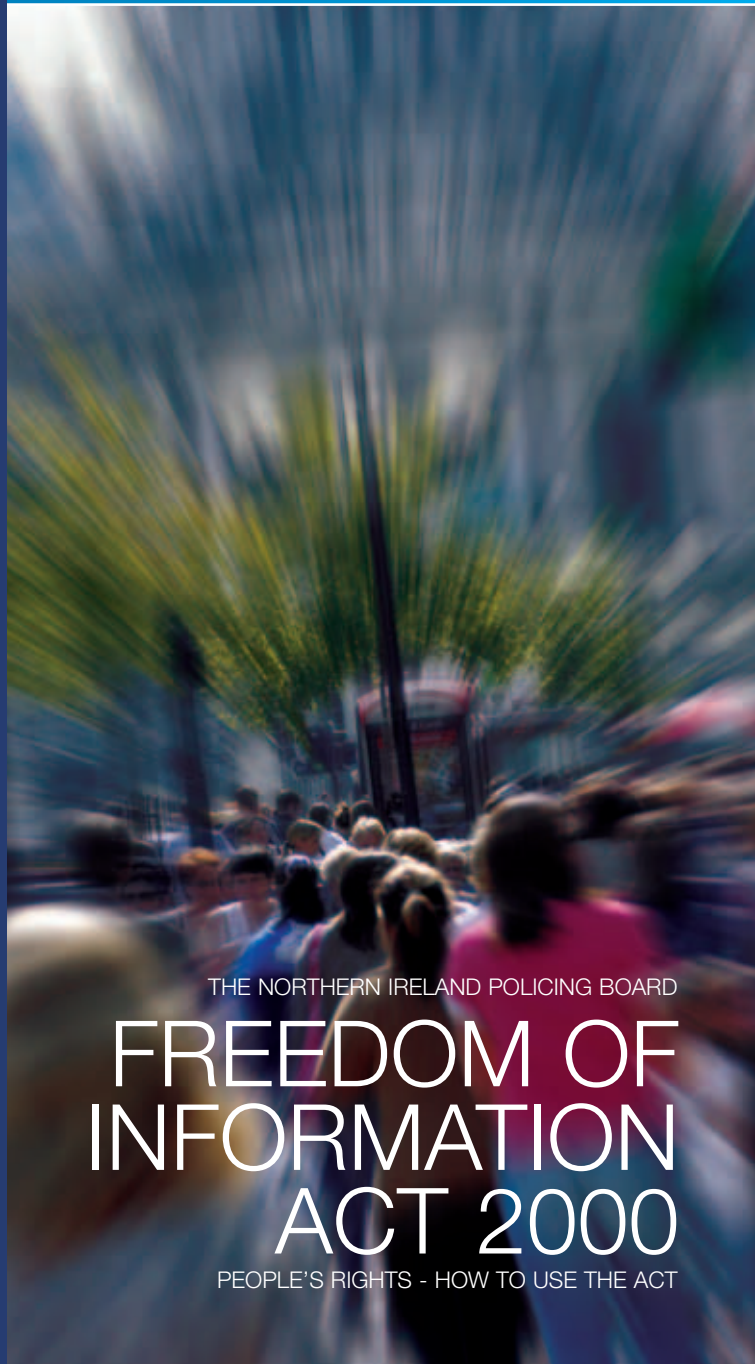
Tel: 028 9040 8500
Fax: 028 9040 8540
Email: information@nipolicingboard.org.uk

DOCUMENT TITLE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

PUBLISHED APRIL 2005
This document is also available upon request in alternative formats including CD and large print. It can also be made available in minority languages or on audiocassette. Requests for alternative formats should be made to the Compliance Branch at the contact details above.

ONLINE FORMAT
This document is available in PDF format from our website.

DISCLAIMER
While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this document, neither the Northern Ireland Policing Board nor its consultants will be held liable for any inaccuracies that may be contained within.



THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD
**FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION
ACT 2000**
PEOPLE'S RIGHTS - HOW TO USE THE ACT

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

People's rights - How to use the act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives any individual the right to request information from public authorities. It is intended to foster a culture of openness and transparency and make Government more accountable. It is also intended that these rights will facilitate better understanding by the public of how public authorities carry out their duties, why they make decisions, and how they spend public money.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board fully supports, and is committed to, the Act and the responsibilities it places on its members and staff.

1. Who can request information?

Anyone can make a Freedom of Information request from anywhere in the world.

2. What information is available?

Any information held by the Policing Board can be released if requested unless it is covered by an exemption. In some instances the Board may need to consult other public authorities and/or third parties in order to reach a decision as to whether information can be released or is covered by an exemption.

Exemptions fall into two distinct categories; absolute and qualified. With an absolute exemption there is no right of access to the information requested. If a qualified exemption applies, consideration must be given to releasing the information if it is in the public interest to do so.

A number of exemptions are outlined in the Act and may be applied to certain types of information, for example, personal information, information reasonably accessible by other means (if it is on our Publication Scheme), or commercial information (see also "What happens if my request is refused?").

3. How do I obtain information?

Information can be obtained by:

- Accessing the Policing Board's Publication Scheme, or by
- Making a written request (including e-mails or faxes).

4. What is a Publication Scheme?

A Publication Scheme is a requirement of the Freedom of Information Act. The Policing Board's Publication Scheme has been approved by the Information Commissioner and details all the information that it will proactively make available without being asked.

The Scheme is available on the Board's website at www.nipolicingboard.org.uk and in hard copy format (as a booklet in all libraries throughout Northern Ireland). If difficulties arise with accessing the information it will then be decided on how best to provide the information in an alternative format.

5. How do I request information?

Requests for information must:

- Be in writing (including e-mails or faxes)
- State clearly what information you require, and
- State the name of the applicant and an address where the information is to be sent (an e-mail address is acceptable).

Requests should be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Policing Board
Freedom of Information Requests
Compliance Branch
James House, Block D
2 – 4 Cromac Avenue
The Gasworks, Belfast, BT7 2JA
E-mail: foi@nipolicingboard.org.uk

6. Who should I contact if I have a query?

The Compliance Manager has responsibility for Freedom of Information issues within the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

If you wish to discuss a request for information or have a query in relation to Freedom of Information, the Compliance Administrator contact details are as follows:

Tel: 028 9040 8628
028 9040 8528
E-mail: foi@nipolicingboard.org.uk

7. What does it cost?

Whilst most information can be accessed free of charge, certain publications and other classes of information will only be available on receipt of payment. If responding to your request would cost more than £600 (fees threshold for the Policing Board) the Board can turn the request down, answer it and charge a fee, or answer it and waive the fee.

If charging a fee the Board can take into account the cost of determining whether the information is held, locating and retrieving the information, extracting the information from other documents and the production and communication of the information to the applicant. The Board will write to you regarding the cost in such cases. If the fee is not paid within three months of notification, the

Board can refuse to supply the information in relation to that request.

8. What happens when I make a request?

When you submit a request for information you will receive a response within 20 working days of receipt of your request. Working days will be defined as Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays and other Public Holidays.

The response you receive from the Policing Board will advise if the information is held, and either provide the information you requested (subject to the payment of a fee if required), or explain why it has not been made available.

9. How many requests can I make?

You can make as many requests as you like. However, section 14 of the Act does state that a public authority can reserve the right to refuse any vexatious or repeated requests. This may include repeated requests from the same person for the same information, or requests which are intended to disrupt the Policing Board's work.

10. Can I ask for the information in a different format?

You may request that the information be supplied in alternative formats. In particular, you may ask for information in permanent (in full) or in summary form or for permission to inspect records containing the information. The Policing Board will provide you with the information in the format you have requested where possible.

The Board may be able to supply the information in alternative languages on request. However, you should discuss this with the member of staff dealing with your request.