



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Please note the text of this request has been reproduced exactly as received.

FOI Reference number: FOI 36/2025

Date: 19 September 2025

Request.

1. After reading through documents sent by NIPB I have been confused by some of the numbers printed on the forms/papers you supplied.
I believe these numbers either refer to template forms or replies you use in your communications with applicants or persons contacting you.
Does the NIPB use standard replies in correspondence with persons who contact it?
2. Can you please provide me with the copies of the following documents and complete the list I have attached below. I have provided the number referring I believe to the document, if you could explain what the document is in the adjacent column.
3. I would also like to see a copy of the Policy Concerning Medical Records. I am not looking for your general policy on the general handling of data, but the actual stand-alone policy of handling a person's medical records.
4. Are medical records stored in locked cupboards?
5. Do all NIPB staff have access to the medical records of a person who has applied for a medical retirement or an injury on duty pension whether current or retrospective?
6. Is one case officer alone, allocated to dealing with one person who makes an application of any sort to NIPB?
7. I note that on some forms there are signature initials handwritten, more than once. Does each file prepared by a case officer go through several different checks, sometimes three sets of initials, if so, what are these checks carried out for.
8. Is there any occasion where a person's file is placed on a shelf for the supervisor to look at later when they are available?
9. The NIPB provides the SMP with a cover report for the medical assessment. Does this report include a medical case summary?
10. What is included in the medical case summary?

11. Are medical details referring to the person being assessed highlighted for the information of the SMP?
12. Who prepares this report?
13. Is this report a summary of the medical condition of the person being assessed?
14. Who decides what should be included within this SMP report?
15. Does the person preparing the report have any medical training?
16. Does NIPB provide staff with a list/index of what to contain in the SMP report?
17. Files I have seen refer to tabs being inserted within the assessed person's file. Who places tabs on the persons file?
18. How is it decided where tabs are placed within the assessed persons file?
19. Has this person any medical training?
20. Does the work carried out by the member of staff placing the tabs in the file have their work checked?
21. How many people check through this file to see tabs are placed in the correct position?
22. Have the people checking this tabbed work any medical training?
23. Is the SMP given time after the assessment of a person, to study the copy of the file used during assessment so that they can further explore the conditions that the person had been assessed for?

Answer:

1. Yes, Board Officials use templates for standard correspondence relating to the processing of applications. However, bespoke correspondence is used for complex queries.
2. As this is personal information, pertaining to a third party, the Board is not in a position to provide you with copies of these documents.
This personal information is exempt from disclosure to you under section 40(2) by virtue of section 40(3)(a)(i) of the FOIA. Section 40(2) allows a public authority to withhold information from a response to a request for information under the FOIA when the information requested is personal information relating to someone other than the requester and its disclosure would contravene one of the data protection principles. The first data protection principle requires personal data to be processed fairly and lawfully. This personal data is exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA as, in our view, it would be unfair to provide it to you, and therefore disclosure would be in contravention of the first principle of the UK General Data Protection Regulation. This is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.
3. The Board does not hold the type of policy you request.

4. This is a request for an explanation and does not constitute a valid Freedom of Information Act request under section 8(1)(c) of the FOIA.
5. No, all files pertaining to cases are locked down / stored securely and can only be accessed by authorised personnel.
6. Yes, each Selected Medical Practitioner (**SMP**) case is allocated to a specific caseworker in that team. Please note the caseworker will change if the application changes to an appeal or reconsideration as a separate team deals with these applications.
7. Yes, checks are carried out for quality, accuracy and assurance purposes.
8. This is a request for an explanation and does not constitute a valid Freedom of Information Act request under section 8(1)(c) of the FOIA.
9. No, Board Officials do not prepare a report for the SMP. A cover paper/case referral is provided to the SMP which contains basic data (i.e. name, force number, dob) and background (i.e. date of joining, application date etc) with incidents/ medical reports tabbed for ease of reference.
10. See response to question 9.
11. The medical conditions are summarised by the Occupational Health Medical Professional at PSNI Occupational Health & Wellbeing (**OHW**).
12. See answer to question 9.
13. See answer to question 9.
14. The content and details of the SMP report are decided solely by the SMP assessing the case.
15. If you are referring to the SMP report, yes, they are Occupational Health Practitioners.
16. See response to question 14.
17. Medical files received from PSNI OHW are tabbed by PSNI OHW. As well as drafting the cover paper/ case referral a caseworker in PPIB also tabs additional information for e.g. injury on duty reports and further information provided by PSNI Attendance Management as well as any further medical evidence provided by the applicant.
18. The only purpose of tabbing documents by the caseworker is to separate them as individual documents to ensure that each document is distinctive and can be located by the SMP during his assessment.
19. No, the tabbing of files is an administrative function used in order for the Board to carry out its statutory function. No medical training is required to tab a file.
20. See response to Q7.
21. One
22. See response to Q19.

23. This is a request for an explanation and does not constitute a valid Freedom of Information Act request under section 8(1)(c) of the FOIA.

If you have queries about this request or the decision, please contact the Board quoting the reference number above. If you are unhappy with the service you have received and wish to make a complaint or request a review you should contact the Board's Chief Executive -

Via Email: foi@nipolicingboard.org.uk

Or in writing at the following address:

Northern Ireland Policing Board
James House
Block D
2 – 4 Cromac Avenue
The Gasworks
Belfast
BT7 2JA

You should contact the Board within 40 working days of this response.

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner. Generally, the Information Commissioner's Office cannot investigate or make a decision on a case unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the Board. You should make complaints to the ICO within six weeks of receiving the outcome of an internal review.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at the following web link –

www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

or in writing at:

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

Telephone: - 0303 1231114
Email: - ni@ico.org.uk

Please be advised that Policing Board replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.nipolicingboard.org.uk.

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.